

HomeStyle

Canada's Housewares Magazine

September 2015

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This year T-fal unveiled its second generation Actify, the Actify Express. It helps families prepare their favourite dishes 25% faster.

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PRINTING & PRODUCTION
Ironstone Media

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

Canadian Home Style Magazine is a registered
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6,000 Canadian housewares buyers, retailers,
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Opening Lines

There's something special about Mary

The day before the Toronto Gift Fair, I stupidly decided to try a new eye cream guaranteed to reduce wrinkles instantly. By the next morning, my eyelids had turned beet red and were swollen shut. (I'm embarrassed to admit this has happened before.) Fortunately, ice and cucumber slices helped but the incident made me think of my dear friend, London Drugs buyer Mary Higgins. Every November, LD holds a big vendor breakfast at the Living Arts Centre, featuring top ranked speakers and the annual supplier awards. About 10 years ago, I was in the crowd at the breakfast when I spotted Mary from across the room (she's hard to miss). When she came over to give me a hug, I was a little surprised by her appearance – specifically her red, puffy eyes. Mary immediately apologized, explaining she had stupidly tried a new eye cream the week before and had a bad reaction. I could definitely relate.



Me and Mary in Hong Kong in 1993.

Since the first day I met Mary Higgins (then Mary Edwards) in 1990, I felt we were kindred spirits. She was not only gorgeous, she was also smart, outspoken and very opinionated – everything I like in a person! I spent two days with her in the fall of that year, interviewing her for a profile article and helping her on a photo shoot. Mary appeared on the cover of *Home Style* in January 1991, and she is still the only buyer to do so. The poster of that cover hung on her office wall for the next 24 years, until her retirement this summer. And during that time, our friendship continued to grow and she became not only a trusted confidante to me, but also a knowledgeable retail buyer I could count on for advice and support.

Mary showed me a side of our industry that few journalists get to see. By letting me into her merchandising world, I witnessed first hand the difference a truly passionate buyer can make. Mary was someone who genuinely loved her job, loved the challenge of finding that next great product, and watching her in action was a treat. Back in the mid-'90s, I spent time with Mary in Hong Kong during the April housewares fair. It coincided with one of her bi-annual buying trips, and she was kind enough to let me join her for a few meetings with wholesalers before going out for dinner one evening. She would get so excited about finding that special line and was a skilled negotiator. Even the dinner itself was exciting as we shared a dish called "dancing shrimp" – a platter of live shrimp doused in alcohol and set aflame! When you went out with Mary, you were always guaranteed a good time.

Once she was back at London Drugs' Richmond, B.C. office, she would get busy putting together the programs for the next season. Planning and execution was key to Mary, and she thrived on the challenge of always staying one step ahead of the competition. She lived by her favourite Ralph Waldo Emerson quote: "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path & leave a trail."

She could be demanding and had high expectations, but suppliers lucky enough to get a listing with her were seldom disappointed. She had an incredible knack for always finding that next big trend, and took great delight when a newly discovered product flew off the shelves at London Drugs – which it usually did. As head merchandiser manager with one of Canada's most innovative and successful retail chains, Mary wielded a lot of power, but she used it wisely. She was exceptionally loyal to those vendors she trusted and devoted to the company that "had provided her with such a great life". She mentored many young buyers over the years, was a champion to her colleagues, and developed the kind of close friendships with vendors we rarely see in this new retail world we live in.

When Mary told me she was retiring this spring, I admit I shed a few tears. Mostly, though, they were tears of gratitude because of all the ways she has enriched both our industry and my life. She will be a very hard act to follow.

– Laurie O'Halloran
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• **Lauren Ober** is the new communications specialist for the Canadian Gift Association. She will handle all of the association's social media accounts.

• **Ken Vannucci** is taking over as appliance buyer for London Drugs following the retirement of Mary Higgins (which is well documented in this issue). Ken has been the merchandise manager in Food and OTC for a number of years. LD has also appointed a new buyer, **Cliff Fong**, who will work with Ken and Jim Norris in several categories, including stationary, hardware and pet.

• **Lisa Egger** has joined Microplane as marketing manager, kitchen products. She will replace Tracy Panase, who has left the company to pursue other interests, the company announced. Egger will report to Joel Arivett, Microplane's president of sales and marketing.

• **Sushil Arora** will take over as CEO of



Danica on January 1st, 2016 following the official retirement of partners Rodney Benson and Jeremy Braude.

• **Geoff Somers** passed away on July 3rd at the age of 85. A veteran of the Canadian hardware/housewares industry, he was one of the founding partners of Somerset House.

• Just as we were going to press with this issue we learned of the passing of a dear friend and much-loved Ontario sales representative, **Al Langelaan**. He died on August 24th following a lengthy illness. Al will be greatly missed and we will have a full tribute in our next issue.

A fond farewell to The Main Course

This past spring, one of the most popular store owners in our business decided to retire and close her store. Marjorie Agnew has been operating The Main Course on Avenue Road in Toronto for over 30 years and her departure has certainly left a gaping hole in our industry's retail landscape.

During her lengthy career (which began at The Bay), Marjorie earned a reputation as a hard-working, very creative retailer who earned the respect of her peers, her suppliers, her employees, and the community she served. I was proud to present her with the Canadian Global Innovator Award (*gia*) in 2003. A regular at every industry trade show, she was a big supporter of Canada Night in Chicago and many other industry events.

With a flair for design and keen understanding of the culinary world, Marjorie combined both at her store with her beautiful seasonal windows and enticing displays. She was known as a loyal customer to her suppliers and was devoted to her employees, most of whom were with her for many years.

Over the past decades, Marjorie was also very involved with the PACT program in Toronto. She regularly donated her time, energy and store products to this worthwhile program where former juvenile offenders are trained in the culinary arts. Canada Night sponsors recognized her valuable work with this group and happily donated any extra proceeds from the event to PACT whenever possible.

Gracious and elegant, Marjorie always had incredible style. Working with her was wonderful, and though she will be missed, we wish her a long, healthy and very happy retirement.

– Laurie O'Halloran




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Letters

• I love your magazine. The content is excellent, and the feature stories about small companies that are owner-operated – like us – are so interesting.

Sue Emslie

Victoria Hardware & Plumbing

• First, let me congratulate you on 25 years of publishing *Home Style*. It is the one magazine that I wait to read every two months. Also, I loved reading the special *Profiles* edition. It was interesting and I applaud you for all the time it took to put this together.

Don Schacter

Don Schacter + Associates

• After waiting for what seemed like an eternity, your 25th anniversary package arrived and I opened it with excitement! I, along with many others, do look forward to the up-to-date information you provide on people, companies and certainly products.

Your "opening lines" and profile articles certainly contribute to your upbeat attitude towards our industry.

Keep printing *Home Style* – you have a grateful audience.

Dennis Heffron

Housewares Distribution

• I just received my first issue of *Home Style* as a retired retailer! I enjoyed reading it and being kept in touch. This summer is the first time in 30 years that I won't be at the gift show!

Congratulations on your 25th anniversary and your wonderful *Profiles* supplement. As always, it was done with great taste and ability.

Marjorie Agnew (retired)

• I really enjoyed the special *Profiles* edition last month. It was nice to learn about the 'roots' of other companies. There are usually just a few companies that are frequently highlighted in our industry, and it was very nice to hear about the others!

You and your team did a great job putting this together!

Jan Hobman

GESCO

Product Launch

A top floor party makes scents

About 200 people, including 75 retailers, visited the Penthouse Suite of the Sandman Hotel during the Toronto Gift Show weekend, August 8th to 9th, for the Canadian launch of the new Parfum Berger collection from **Lampe Berger Paris**.



The entire Lampe Berger Canada Team was on hand for the two day event. Shown left to right, Zahraa Bahr, Sandy Tomaz, general manager Mitch Soiffer, Jacinthe Turgeon and Franca Garreffa.



Ellen Blefgen and Karen Harden from Weather-vane in Erin, Ontario with Lampe Berger's Maritimes sales rep Colin Macdonald.



Sigrid Wolm of From The Kitchen To The Table in Orangeville, Ontario, second from right, next to Lynne Boni and Franca Garreffa, left, and Rosy Loewith, far right, of Lampe Berger Paris.



Heavenly scents and gorgeous table settings welcomed guests to the Penthouse Suite of the Sandman.



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Setting the culinary standard for 90 years

Close to 200 customers, chefs and members of the media attended a culinary extravaganza on August 10th to celebrate **Le Creuset's** 90th anniversary. Held at the posh Malaparte at the Tiff Bell Lightbox in downtown Toronto, the anniversary soiree showcased eight of the top chefs in the city, each with his/her own cooking station, featuring a mouthwatering selection of dishes from foie gras to chicken cacciatore. A special commemorative cake (shown right) reflected the signature style of Le Creuset cookware. Each guest received a limited edition version of 'La Cocotte Originale'.



Isabel Kouyoumdjian is shown with her father (and host for the evening) Le Creuset's managing director Raffi Kouyoumdjian.

Though a full patio had been set up on the rooftop overlooking King Street, pouring rain kept guests inside. The room was awash in orange lighting and plenty of Le Creuset cast iron cookware in a rainbow of vivid colours.



Home Style's Laurie O'Halloran, left, with Faye Gooding, CEO of Le Creuset America. She spoke to the guests about the company's rich history and thanked the retailers for their support over the years.

Le Creuset Anniversary Party



The crowd was wowed by the culinary talent on hand at the party. Participating chefs included Jason Bangerter, Tobey Nemeth and Michael Caballo, Massimo Capra (above left), John Jackson and Connie DeSousa, David Hawskworth, Christopher Cho and Dale MacKay, Mark McEwan (who sent his team) and Anthony Walsh (above right).



Caren McSherry of The Gourmet Warehouse in Vancouver, left, with celebrity TV chef Ricardo, right, and Robert McCullough of Penguin Random House, centre.



Natalie Nelson of The Pan Tree in Sherwood Park, Alberta, left, and Karin Milton of Chef's Edge in Kelowna, B.C.



Lawrence Burden of Kiss The Cook is shown with his son, David, right, and Denise Gaze of *Home Style Magazine*.



Le Creuset's Ontario sales rep, Emil Rocha, left, with Lawrence Burden of Kiss The Cook, right.



Donna-Marie Pye and Maria Burjoski, co-owners of Relish Cooking Studio in Waterloo, at the opening cocktail reception.



Caren McSherry of Vancouver's Gourmet Warehouse with Christina Valagao.

Overwaitea expands

British Columbia-based Overwaitea Food Group is continuing its rapid growth, announcing plans to open seven stores in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, provinces where it does not currently have a presence. The new stores, scheduled to open throughout 2016, are a combination of existing buildings and new construction, and will range from 40,000 to 65,000 square feet, depending on the market.

Dollar tree buys Family Dollar stores

After a long acquisition process contested by competitor Dollar General, Dollar Tree has reported that it completed the acquisition of Family Dollar Stores.

Family Dollar shareholders will receive \$59.60 in cash and stock at a rate of 0.2484 per share of its common stock for each share of Family Dollar common

stock held under merger agreement terms unanimously approved by each company in July 2014.

The combined Dollar Tree/Family Dollar organization will operate more than 13,000 stores in 48 states and five Canadian provinces, with sales exceeding \$19 billion annually.

Canadians love to get a bargain

Consumers love a bargain. In fact, 91% of Canadians say they receive “great happiness or pleasure” from a good sale or discount, according to a recent survey from Queen’s Business School. However, they’re divided on whether they’re actually getting a deal. Half of Canadian consumers (49%) believe they are saving money when a product is discounted, yet 45% believe stores inflate the regular price in order to discount a product.

While most consumers are drawn to

sales, the internet has created a “new strategic consumer” that companies must be aware of, said Yuri Levin, Queen’s School of Business professor and expert in dynamic pricing and revenue management.

Social networking, for example, allows customers to share information and figure out pricing patterns. And consumers can price match on various retailers’ websites. With customers easily sharing information about pricing, “there is big pressure for companies to be transparent,” said Levin.

“Retailers are trying to put in place pretty sophisticated technologies that use advanced data analytics to scientifically adjust prices based on the actual consumer response,” said Levin. “What’s really important for the consumers to understand is that their behaviour in the store and their behaviour online matters when it comes to companies setting prices and adjusting prices.”

While research has shown that different customers will pay different amounts for the same or similar products, consumers can resent differential pricing and regardless of their desire for achieving a good deal, the influence of the discount will be lost if consumers feel deceived in the process.

Those who feel they did get a good deal will spread the word. Eighty-nine percent of shoppers who receive a good sale or discount say they positively communicate it to other people.

Hudson's Bay is making online shopping personal for Saks Fifth Avenue and Lord & Taylor customers by customizing home pages based on previous behavior and personalizing in-store messaging. The move is an attempt to convert customers into high spenders, as people who engage with a shop both physically and online tend to spend double or quadruple the amount in a single transaction, according to the company's technology division.

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Dollarama continues to defy expectations

Dollarama, the largest operator of dollar stores in Canada, expects to open its 1,000th store this year, riding on a year of growth and jumps in quarterly profits. Retail analyst Doug Stephens says there are several reasons why Dollarama has done so well in recent years, and many of them have to do with seismic changes in Canada's retail sector.

Canadian middle incomes have been stagnating for decades, and after the big recession of 2008-09, shoppers became much more conscious with their dollars, Stephen says. They are less focused on brands and more interested in finding good deals.

"So we have consumers going up market, who are shopping luxury, and we have consumers going down market and they're shopping at places like Dollarama. So they've really capitalized on that growth," he told CTV's *Canada AM*.

The worst place to be right now, Stephens says, is the middle-of-the-road retail space that department stores dominated for so long. Consumers are saying that when they want something special, they'll go to a luxury retailer for a great brand or great shopping experience. But for everything else, they're content to shop at discount stores.

The key to Dollarama's success is in creating a consistent brand that shoppers have come to recognize and trust.

"They've done a good job of putting in our heads that Dollarama logo and creating a brand within the dollar store category that gives consumers a sense of trust about going there," says Stephens.

That sense of trust has even encouraged shoppers who never shopped at discount stores to start visiting, and buying an ever-growing list of items.

At the same time, they've also been able to quietly moved price points up. Dollarama is now becoming a bit of a

"mini department store," selling more items in the \$2 - \$3 range, which may be why the average checkout bill for a Dollarama customer rose 5.9% in the first quarter this year compared with last.

Dollarama added 17 stores in the first quarter, bringing its total to 972 locations. The company plans to hit a maximum of about 1,400 stores.

Mall landlords have plenty of space to fill

The departure of discounter Target and a raft of others from Canada leaves landlords with plenty of space to fill at a time when many merchants are downsizing amid the rise of e-commerce.

In all, an estimated 21 million square feet of retail real estate will be vacant this year - almost three times the amount of new retail development that comes on the market annually.

Oxford expects it will take until 2016 or 2017 to fill Target space in most of its properties.

Tempting Tampa with food and wine

At the new Restoration Hardware store opening in Florida's International Plaza this fall, shoppers won't have to go farther than the three-story retailer's rooftop garden bar for some wine and hors d'oeuvres.

Tampa is among the first cities in the U.S. to get a Restoration Hardware gallery store concept, which is currently under construction next to the Capital Grille at Bay Street. When it opens in November, Restoration Hardware will be one of several retail chains in the Tampa Bay area that let customers eat and drink where they shop - a trend that has been revived by Nordstrom, Bass Pro Shops, IKEA and others in an effort to give shoppers more reasons to come to brick and mortar stores.

Major packaged-food companies lost \$4 billion in market share last year, as shoppers switch to fresh and organic alternatives.

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Housewares head to the Smithsonian

Familiar housewares brands including Le Creuset, Zwilling J.A. Henckels and Pyrex have taken their place among the most notable of American artifacts at a new Smithsonian demo kitchen.

On July 1st, the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History opened a demonstration kitchen within its innovation wing, officially known as the Wallace H. Coulter Performance Plaza. The kitchen would allow chefs, farmers, bakers and others to share their knowledge about the history of cooking in America and also complete science experiments related to food.

Perhaps the most important tool in the new kitchen is the Halton Ventilated Ceiling System, which reportedly removes any cooking "byproducts" that could harm valuable items located throughout the museum.

Jarden buys Waddington Group

Jarden Consumers Solutions has acquired Waddington Group, a manufacturer of premium disposable tableware for commercial, food service and retail markets, from an investment fund managed by private equity firm Olympus Partners for \$1.35 billion.

According to Jarden officials, the transaction provides a meaningful addition to Jarden's portfolio while creating opportunities in cross-selling, broadening the distribution platform particularly in the B2B category, and deepening Jarden's talent bench. Waddington, which is expected to contribute approximately \$800 million to 2016 revenues, will be reported as part of Jarden's Branded Consumables segment.

The transaction is expected to be funded through a combination of cash on hand, common equity and a mix of bank debt and bonds.

Waddington has delivered consistent organic growth that is in line with Jarden's overall top-line organic growth profile of 3% to 5%, as well as strong operating margins and solid cash flow.

Lenox launches Kate Spade tableware

She's one of the hottest names in fashion and now Kate Spade will be appearing on tables across Canada. Lenox will unveil the new Kate Spade line exclusively at Hudson's Bay this September followed by a full roll out to all stores by January 2016. The collection is geared to millennials and includes contemporary dinnerware, such as the polka dot pattern shown right, plus kitchen gadgets, serving sets, glass canister sets, bakeware, cookware and woodenware.



Fox Run celebrates 20 years in Canada

Fox Run Brands, a leading supplier of kitchenware, bakeware and grillware, is celebrating its 20th anniversary serving the Canadian market. The company started 40 years ago as a North American cookie cutter manufacturer and has grown to include more than 3,000 products for the home.

Today, with headquarters in Canada, the U.S. and China, Fox Run continues to expand its market presence here with 42 recognizable brands and a wide range of premium quality products.

CEO Sean Leonard says "Fox Run Canada's 20th anniversary is a tremendous milestone. In two decades we've introduced incredible innovation to the industry with no signs of slowing down. This past year alone we've launched two new brands, Jarware and Suzie Q, which were both developed in-house. We're proud of our drive and forward momentum, our creativity, and our top-tier professionals at Fox Run Canada."

Sean adds "I want to thank Fox Run Canada's employees and customers for two decades of achievements. Their dedication and loyalty to our commitment of achieving excellence has been terrific. We've done fantastic things together, and I can't wait to see our triumphs to come."

Fox Run Brands is headquartered in Ivyland, Pennsylvania but also has offices in Toronto, Canada and Shanghai, China.

Euro-Pro takes on a new corporate identity

Euro-Pro is rebranding under a new corporate identity – SharkNinja, blending the manufacturer of vacuum and kitchen appliance brands. The company stated that this change allows it to capitalize on the awareness, consumer trust and success of each brand to establish one unified identity.

"We are proud of our success and are plan to solidify SharkNinja's position as one of the world's leading household appliance companies, as well as a top employer in North America, China and Europe," says Mark Barrocas, president of SharkNinja.

SharkNinja is a market leader in the housewares industry with more than \$1.6 billion dollars in annual revenue. The company said it will use its refreshed identity to highlight its new global brand campaign and corporate culture in order to attract top talent.

The company has also signed the lease for a new 150,000 square foot corporate headquarters in Needham, MA, and is seeking new facilities for its teams in Alabama and Suzhou, China. They have also announced the opening of an office in Toronto, Ontario.

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Trend Tracking

NY Fair highlights hot food trends

According to the experts, there are several new food trends hitting the market in the coming months. The trends were showcased at the Fancy Food Show, held in New York in late June 28.

The industry can expect gazpacho to go while beets and flower-infused goods will become increasingly in-demand. Cocktail culture will continue to grow and can now be seen away from the bar in household syrups and sauces. Additionally, corn will step into the spotlight with items like yogurt popcorn and sweet corn tortilla chips.

Canadians show they love their smoothies

The smoothie trend continues to gain popularity in Canada. Perfect for breakfast on-the-go or a nutritious treat, more Canadians than ever are making smoothies. According to Vitamix research, 56% of Canadian households create at least one smoothie at home every month and 43% have purchased a smoothie in the past 30 days.

The smoothie movement is also gaining traction with younger generations. Compared to other age groups, smoothie consumption is highest among millennials. About 16% of smoothie makers between the ages of 18 and 34 said they have a routine, blending at least six to 10 smoothies per month. Survey respondents with teenage children at home were also more likely to make smoothies, with 15% saying they make more than 10 smoothies in a 30-day period.

More than a quarter of Vitamix survey respondents say smoothies are an

easy way to increase their intake of fruits, vegetables and nutrients and help reach their recommended daily intake of produce. About 24% of Canadians choose blended beverages because they like the taste, while 20% feel that smoothies are healthier than other drink options. Eleven percent of Canadians also use smoothies as a meal replacement during the day.

A desire for a quick or grab-and-go snack is another reason Canadians choose blended beverages. About 20% of survey respondents said they consume smoothies as a snack. Incorporating blended beverages as snacks allows Canadians to consume healthier selections, such as citrus fruits, leafy greens or flaxseed – all in one delicious drink.

Canadians find smoothie inspiration from a variety of sources, including:

- Friends, family and coworkers
- Recipe or cooking websites
- Social media
- Cooking or food magazines
- Lifestyle magazines

"Our research found 15% of all Canadians have a smoothie drinking regimen, consuming six or more smoothies per month," says Karen Haeffling, vice president of marketing, Vitamix.

Alessi unveils coffee and tea products

This year Alessi will be launching two new key new product initiatives. The new products were showcased during a presentation at the company's New York City flagship store in July.

The first introduction is a collaboration with Illy for a manual Moka espresso maker. Named La Pulcina, the Moka espresso maker marks Illy's first partnership with Alessi. La Pulcina features a more spherical shape than a traditional Moka pot, to create an optimal mixture of pressure and temperature to get an ideal aroma and extraction from the coffee without burning.

The second key initiative from Alessi this year will be a new tea product to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Michael Graves tea kettle, which to date has sold over 1.5 million units.

Amazon recently floated a proposal to NASA to reserve air space between 200 and 400 feet above the ground for the high-speed delivery drones the retailer one day hopes to utilize. The proposal also called for an additional 100-foot, no-fly-zone buffer to maintain the drones' distances from other aircraft.

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In the name of retailing

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



"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." – Charles Darwin

A name can be the 'make it or break it' factor in the long term success of any company. Just ask Ralph Lifshitz. Better known the world over as Ralph Lauren, this marketing guru knew that his family name lacked the panache required to build a brand empire.

His first foray into the fashion world was with an instantly successful line of oversized men's neckties under the Polo label in 1967. He chose the brand name because he felt the sport embodied style and luxury. His namesake would later become synonymous with luxury fashion and housewares around the world. Ralph Lauren was the first American designer to open a European boutique in London, England in 1981. The brand formally became known as Polo Ralph Lauren in 1987 and has revolutionized marketing around the world with the infamous polo player logo since.

While choosing a strong brand name from the get go is crucial, knowing when to rebrand can be equally as important. Large companies tend to rebrand every 20 to 30 years for all sorts of reasons; public perception, changes in product offering, consumer demand, mergers and acquisitions or the timeliness/relevance of their name. Remember Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Datsun (Nissan), MasterCharge (MasterCard) or Backrub (Google)?

As businesses evolve, so should their branding. Recently having undergone a rebranding ourselves, I can speak first-

hand of the positive impact a fresh new name and image can have on the overall performance of your business.

While CA Paradis Inc. has continued to operate under its corporate name for the past 90+ years, we decided a few years back that with our growing retail division, it was time to properly identify ourselves to the general public. Many longtime customers knew that our original fine china shop had evolved into a full blown restaurant equipment supply operation. However, people who had never visited or weren't familiar with our name didn't quite know what they would find on the other side of the door.

Our main goal and business mantra is to be "purveyors of fine kitchenwares for both professional and amateur chefs alike". The "restaurant only" stigma seemed to stay with some people, even though we originated as a tabletop retailer and have always welcomed the general public.

Our longtime connection with the chef community and francophone family name, Paradis, led to the eventual rebranding The Chef's Paradise. While the name change conveniently fit in with our company history and objectives, our customers were the ones who really drove the rebranding by complimenting us with the moniker upon discovery.

There are several things to evaluate before rebranding a company. Most importantly, does your brand truly need revamping? A brand is much more than just a logo and name; however, both should quickly relate to the values and needs of your target audience.

Chances are your demographic is

changing and the manner in which you can identify and relate to these changing interests will ensure that you keep earning their business. Case in point – RadioShack. The electronics retailer once filled a niche market by selling small electronics, batteries, telephones and transistor radios in small urban areas. In a futile attempt to update their image in 2009, RadioShack Corporation spent millions of dollars to rebrand as "The Shack", a play on name of NBA legend Shaquille O'Neal.

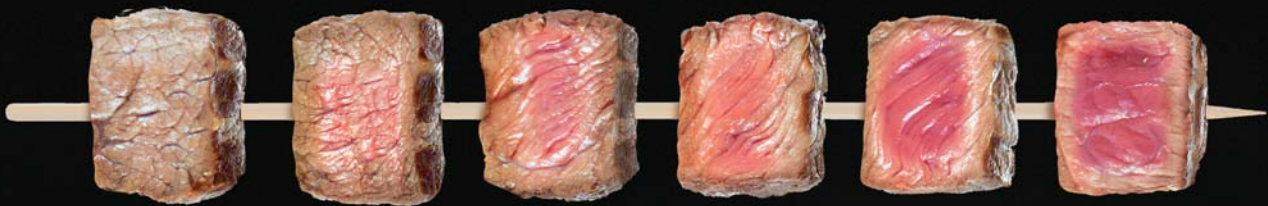
The nickname was met with heavy criticism. Many felt that it conjured negative images of a dusty, run down, old shack. Look up the word shack on dictionary.com and it is defined as a rough cabin or shanty. The nickname quickly became a punchline, a marketing kiss of death. We all know how the RadioShack story ends. In their attempt to rebrand they missed the mark. It wasn't the name that led to their demise but rather the imagery of the name: a run down cabin selling antiquated technology.

There is also a huge investment in getting your new message out. It's important that all your brand ambassadors are on board: staff, suppliers, PR contacts, and most importantly, customers.

Humans tend to resist change. To successfully launch a rebrand you need those who have been longtime supporters to understand your goals. Consumers like companies with history. Always be mindful to pay homage to your original brand and vision but allow the opportunity to inject a breath of fresh air into your business and create a new vision for your company's future. 🐦



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Mary Higgins retires

August 25th, 2015, marked the end of an era for both London Drugs and the Canadian housewares industry as Mary Higgins officially retires. In classic Mary style, she worked diligently to create a seamless transition in her department while planning for departure. London Drugs has always been her number one priority and she continued to show tremendous leadership throughout the transition.

Mary first started with LD in July of 1973 and progressed over the years through different roles, eventually being named merchandise manager in 1990. She has been a true trailblazer and an icon in the industry. Her influence in the business community as well as within London Drugs has been profound. Her influence can be seen throughout the general merchandise division today. Mary's professional, strategic approach and remarkable contributions to the industry will long be remembered by those fortunate enough to have worked with her. – Rob Felix, v.p., London Drugs

Saying goodbye to a dear friend and co-worker

I never thought I'd see the day when my friend, Mary Higgins, would no longer be in the office beside me. I joined the buying team at London Drugs in August of 1999, and until then, Mary had been buying all of the housewares and hardware lines plus greeting cards, books/magazines and seasonal products! I took over half of her workload, which you think would have been a breeze. However, six months into the job, I was still working long hours trying to get all the work done. It was a real testament to what Mary was able to accomplish for so many years with a very small support group.

Mary quickly became a great friend and a wonderful mentor. She had nothing but positive words of encouragement and lots – and I do mean lots – of constructive daily input over the next 16 years.

Mary proved to be a great travel companion and was always interested in a new adventure. I quickly learned her 'road code' and realized that Tylenol plus copious amounts of water could often make up for lack of sleep. Mary travelled to the Orient for the first time in 1986, long before most retailers were sending their buying teams. Those were fast-paced times in retail and although the business in the Orient was male-dominated; Mary excelled overseas, creating a legacy that stands to this day.

The appliance category was part of a vision that Mary had when she started. In the early 1980s, she was given her first opportunity with a four foot section. By the mid '90s, small appliances were a core business at London Drugs and Mary went on to build a category that set the bench mark in Western Canada.

What really separated Mary from the rest of the pack were her incredible people skills. Occasionally I would bring my teenage daughter into work and her first question was "will Mary be in today?" She knew everyone's family, both employees and vendors, and genuinely cared about their well-being. I remember walking into her office one day when she was working the phones like a politician. Someone in our the vendor community had lost their job and she was busy arranging interviews with other companies.

Mary loved Canada Night in Chicago in the early years, when it was a place to connect with old friends and meet new ones. It was amazing the way she could work a room. Watching her work a trade show was just as impressive. She left every booth with the vendor thinking they would triple their business the next year!

When Mary announced her retirement there was a parade of co-workers who came to her office, many leaving in tears. Her profound impact on the employees of London Drugs, both at the stores and in head office, will be felt for years.

Thank you for everything Mary. May your retirement be full of great adventures and wonderful health. – Jim Norris, merchandise manager, London Drugs



Mary, shown in an early promotion photo, started at LD in 1973 and worked her way up from rebuyer to merchandise manager.



Over the years, Mary walked many shows at Chicago's McCormick Place with Wynne Powell, left, and colleague John Vasconcelos.

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Mary (then Edwards) was profiled in the January 1991 issue of *Home Style*. We thought it would be clever to have such a 'colourful character' dressed in somber tones for the photo but her true personality still shone through! – Laurie O'Halloran



Retirees remember an exceptional buyer

For new product developers, Mary was a dream to deal with. She was able to see instantly the potential in a new product and 99% of the time, she was right on the money. A trend setter, she could understand new concepts better than anyone. I remember when we first introduced air cleaners with ion technology. A lot of buyers were doubtful, but Mary understood how it worked and was one of the first to jump into the category. Of course Mary drove a hard bargain but she was fair and good for her word. She stood behind what she said and was always honourable. A partner in the truest sense of the word.

Gerry Byle, former president, Kaz/Bionaire

Over her long tenure with London Drugs, Mary was, in my opinion, the best small appliance buyer in the country. She knew her products, and more importantly she knew her customers. She was always ready to try something new and that's why London Drugs was always the leader in this category. She was also a fun buyer to deal with and had a zany sense of humour that never got in the way of doing her job. It made her a real pleasure to deal with. The industry is losing a real icon.

Al Johnstone, former president, Salton Canada

I first met Mary when I was with Braun in the 1980s. I was immediately impressed with her strong interpersonal skills. You felt comfortable talking to Mary because she had a sincere interest in business partnerships, but also in you as a person. Mary was a true merchant and innovator in her product planning. She was the first to introduce "Event Marketing" at London Drugs with incentives and in store merchandising support. Never satisfied with the status quo, she was able to motivate, challenge and inspire vendors to perform at the highest level. Most of all, Mary cared.

Karl Wulf, former vice president, Braun/Salton Canada

A truly professional marketer, Mary was a gem in the housewares industry. She was always true to her word and a handshake meant a partnership. It was always a "win-win" situation for LD and DeLonghi. We enjoyed several years of mutual growth and substantial profits together. I will always cherish our friendship and the mutual respect we had for each other.

John O'Brien, former president of DeLonghi Canada



Mary at Canada Night with sales agent John Pickersgill in 2010, left, and at a vendor reception in Chicago with her good friends, Jim and Judy Mitchell, right.

A personal message from Mary

During my time at London Drugs, I was blessed to be part of a company and industry that are truly amazing. There have been so many wonderful vendors. I have been honored to have worked with people like Al Johnstone, John O'Brien, Gerry Byle, Bill Callisina, Karl Wulf and so many more, now retired.

The vendors that have inspired me daily include John Pickersgill, Jim Weatherall, Emilio, Jim and Judy Mitchell and too many more to list.

I will also fondly remember my competitors and my peers over the years. They were – and are still – brilliant. They made me work harder and smarter every day and many have become friends. From Nadia Eremita of Canadian Tire to Kate Wise, ex-Consumers Distributing, to the late Jim Ypma and George Anderson of The Bay. And I'll never forget Larry Cote and Bob Beach of Woodwards. Each one has been an amazing part of my journey at London Drugs.

I could lie and say LD has always been just a small drug store in western Canada, but I never believed it. When you look back at the competition we faced, we knew we had to be nimble – faster and better. I always felt we were bigger than life. There was never any "little drug store mentality" in my mind.

I had amazing mentors, including Lenny Marks, Wynne Powell, Rob Felix, Clint Mahlman and Jim Norris. Everyone made a difference in my life and I hope I did in theirs as well. My support 'girls' – Freda, Jerri, Janine, Linda, Ash and Tillie – thanks for making me look so good everyday. I am so grateful.

To my husband, Ron, and daughters Erin (Ryan) and Jenni (Aaron), I am sorry if I missed many of our special family occasions. I appreciate you always letting me go on and on talking about my work. But it was through my work that I was lucky to visit many parts of the world I never would have seen otherwise.

After 43 years, I wonder if I am the oldest appliance buyer in the business? I am definitely the most experienced. But I sure loved the small appliance category. I enjoyed seeing, understanding and predicting the trends and was thrilled to be a part of many rock star product launches. You had to believe.

I want to thank my friend Laurie for letting me take up so much space in *Home Style* over the years. I love this magazine. You have been a great spokesperson and an inspiration to so many people. You believed in this industry, then and even more now. What a great publication you bring to us all.

Thanks to everyone I worked with for all the greatness. It has been a wicked and wonderful ride.

Mary Higgins (retired)

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John Lewis always aims to please

Michelle Hespe checks out one of five global honorees from the 2015 IHA Global Innovation Awards (**gia**) and discovers the very clever concept behind the United Kingdom's trend-setting department store chain

Imagine a department store where the customers made the business decisions? Where the people from the street created and guided the retail philosophy to entice, please and retain customers? In essence, that's the framework that John Lewis stores – under the John Lewis Partnership – are based upon, because the company is owned by a trust on behalf of its employees, who are known as Partners. This year, the combined work of those Partners resulted in the business scooping one of the world's top retail awards – becoming one of the five most innovative retail

stores in the world at *gia* in Chicago.

Every year, the International Housewares Association hosts the *gia* awards, which brings together not only leading retailers in the world, but editors and publishers of the top housewares publications to form a jury headed up by four expert judges, who are all retail experts in different sectors of the industry.

This year, the jury and judges chose John Lewis as one of five global honorees for its great architecture; theatrical, creative displays; thought-provoking use of ordinary products, and its breathtaking merchandise displays.

They also praised the store for its innovative pop-up mini shops in the store's aisles, and all agreed that John Lewis is exemplary in cross-channel sales, utilizing an impressive online store and mobile app.

The core business approach of John Lewis, with its 'Partners', is what initially makes it stand apart from many other retail operations.

"The John Lewis Partnership's reputation is founded on the uniqueness of our ownership structure and our commercial success," says Nicola Hattersley, buyer from the Cookshop sector of John Lewis. "Our purpose is 'the happiness of all our members, through their worthwhile, satisfying employment in a successful business', with success measured on our ability to sustain and enhance our position both as an outstanding retailer and as a thriving example of employee ownership. With this in mind, our strategy is based on three interdependent objectives: Partners, customers and profit."

It is now over 150 years since the first John Lewis Store opened its doors in London's Oxford Street in 1864. From that day forward, the business has had the same pledge to its customers: 'Never knowingly undersold'.

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will always be as low as the lowest price in the neighborhood, has been our slogan for over 75 years," explains Nicola. "Through the efforts of our Partners serving customers with our suppliers' high-quality goods, we have succeeded in building the largest department store retailer in the UK."

It is indeed an impressive collection of retail outlets, with 43 John Lewis shops, 31 department stores, 10 'John Lewis at Home' stores and shops at both St Pancras International and Heathrow Terminal.

"All of the stores offer an exciting, inspiring environment for our customers to shop," says Nicola. "They provide theatre and inspiration through cross-merchandised displays, good orientation, navigation and facilities so our customers can shop with ease, and our multi-channel proposition is integrated throughout our branches so customers can view our extended range online."

The *gia* judges and jury were particularly impressed with three facets of John Lewis: the Partner concept, their pop-up stores and their omni-channel approach to business.

As those in retail have witnessed over the last decade, pop-ups give businesses a chance to showcase products that might not always be their current line of focus, and a chance to test a niche or sector of business that they haven't been involved in before. It also gives businesses a chance to dabble in servicing demographics that they have not approached before, and to bring particular products together for celebrations or timely events.

"Pop-up shops within store give us an exciting opportunity to showcase different product themes such as a showcase of British brands, or to support a cross-category brand such as Orla Kiely (a top Irish fashion designer). This year we also had a pop-up shop that pulled all the products together to celebrate our 150th birthday," she adds.

The omni-channel approach that John Lewis impressively adopts has them reaching their customers no matter what way they shop. An innovative ex-



Shoppers and patrons are entertained by chefs preparing meals in the window of the John Lewis restaurant, above. Below, the expansive cookware display at the London store.



ample of this is the marketing to support a new initiative called the 'Cook Edition'. The partners approached John Brown content marketing agency with the task of informing both existing and new customers of its cookware and dining ranges, and from this brief meeting, the John Lewis Cook Edition was created. It is essentially an edited offering of recipes and the supporting kitchen gear needed to cook and present it. The initiative is led by a quarterly 16-page magazine featuring beautifully photographed dishes, at-home entertainment ideas and product stories by leading voices in the food industry.

"The publication sits on the Cooks Table fixture in-store, supported by product highlighters to accompany the stories told in-depth in the publication," explains Nicola. "And for those who want to digest the publication digitally, our newsstand app features additional digital content and features, such as step-by-step recipe guides and click-to-buy functions."

The app also houses video content that is produced to bring the recipes and products to life, which are then utilized across John Lewis owned social estate as a means of encouraging their customers to engage with them through Facebook,

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Windows shed a light on the fun and functional kitchen products carried by John Lewis, above. Below, a dramatic display greets customers in the fabric department.



Twitter and Pinterest. Once engaged, customers are then enticed to discover more by investigating the John Lewis Cooking & Entertaining hub online.

"To provide an external voice, we also engage our blogger network to bring these stories to life through their own creations of our recipes, as well as media inserting cooking ideas into national press publications and key food titles," says Nicola.

John Lewis also ensures that the Partners are spreading good word of their business, and with the training and development that they receive, it's no wonder that they do. "There is emphasis on Partners driving their own development which is supported by reviews twice a year that help formulate a Partners Development Programme," she says.

For customer service, John Lewis has a training program called 'Love to Sell', that was developed using customer and Partner feedback. It's approach puts the customer at the heart of sales using a self-explanatory five-step ladder:

- **Show me you know me**
- **Inspire me**
- **Find me a solution**
- **Tell me what I need to know**
- **Make it easy for me**

One of the most important factors for John Lewis, Nicola says, is that as a partnership the company is democratic, open, fair and transparent. "The Partners have a voice through a number of democratic channels so there is a true sense of pride in belonging to something. Everyone can influence how the business is run," she explains.

It's this unique approach and structure as a partnership has given the company an innovative, not to mention highly successful way of doing business, ensuring that since 1864 John Lewis has grown to become the most successful department stores in the United Kingdom, and one of the latest five stores in the world to proudly call a global *gia* their own. ☺

*For more information on the **gia** (Global Innovation Awards) program in 2015-2016, contact Piritta Törrö at piritta.torro@inspiredconnection.fi. Additional information is available online at www.housewares.org/gia.*

For more information about the International Home + Housewares Show and to pre-register for the 2016 Show, taking place in Chicago on March 5-8, 2016, please visit www.housewares.org.



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Poetry in motion

In 2012, effervescent retailer Donna-Marie Hyde fulfilled her lifelong dream of opening her own kitchen shop. Today, *The Culinary Poet* has become a favourite with both locals and tourists in the charming resort town of Goderich, Ontario

By Denise Gaze

Donna-Marie Hyde's warm and friendly approach has endeared her to the surrounding community. Her store is a welcome retail refuge offering a wide array of giftware and kitchenware packed into a small, 1,000-square-foot space.



Driving through the beautiful town of Goderich, Ontario, on the eastern shores of Lake Huron, I spotted a sign that claimed it was the “prettiest town in Canada attributed to Queen Victoria”. Although no reigning monarch has ever actually visited Goderich, it does make a good conversation starter, and it certainly does not detract from the town’s charm. With three gorgeous beaches and a population of only 7,825 people, it is a truly picturesque setting.

Goderich also happens to be home to Sifto Salt and the world’s largest salt mine. But an even greater claim to fame is the fact that Walt Disney’s father, Elias, went to Goderich Central school. It’s said that Walt was so enthralled with the main square in the centre of town that he used it’s wagon wheel design when he created Disneyland.

If that’s not enough to make you want to visit Goderich, it’s also home to Donna-Marie Hyde, the effervescent owner of the lyrically-named kitchen shop *The Culinary Poet*.

A store that’s as lovely and warm as the town itself, *The Culinary Poet* is a delight to visit. A friendly greeting by Donna-Marie lets you know you are truly in a magical place.

Donna-Marie came up with the store’s unique name after a weekend of brainstorming with family and friends, turned up ‘nothing that really spoke to me.’ Instead, she sat down at her computer and started punching in different words and reading their meanings. When she came up with *The Culinary Poet*, it was not initially well received.

“My husband, Jim, said, ‘I’m not going to tell anyone what you named the store,’” she recalls. “My daughter said ‘those words don’t go together’ and I told them to think about it, because



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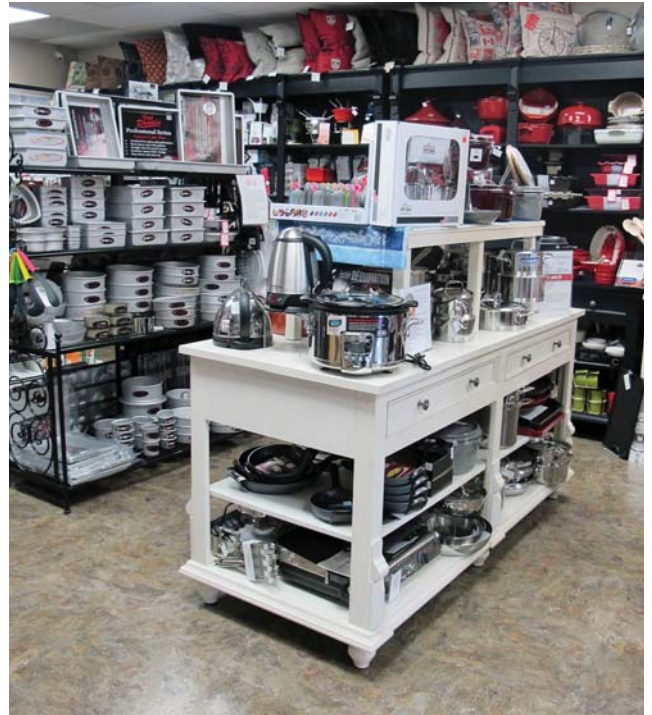


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Above: a charming table setting in pink and green faces the front window. Right: bakeware and cookware are amongst the store's best sellers.



they do. You will either love the name or hate it, but you will always remember it," adds Donna-Marie

It was a wise choice by Donna-Marie, who grew up in the Elmira/Kitchener/Waterloo area and has been in retail for 40 years. She initially discovered how much she enjoyed working with people during her first job as a server at The Knights of Columbus.

"I also worked in a number of stores in my time," she adds. "I started in retail in the 1970s. I have managed stores, I have been a buyer for stores and at one point, I started thinking about buying my own store."

A few years ago she asked Jim what he thought about her opening a store.

"Are you crazy?" was his response. But today, he backs her 100%. They discuss the store together at the end of every day, and any weekend he is in town, he will help out in the store.

The Culinary Poet opened its doors in 2012. The building – a former TV and Stereo store – did need some remodeling. It ended up needing a little more elbow grease than most startups after a Class F3 tornado ripped through Goderich in 2011. It only lasted 12 seconds, but in that short period of time,

one person died and hundreds of homes and businesses were destroyed.

"We took possession of the shop on May 23rd. There were no floors and the walls were unpainted so it was a bit of a whirlwind. I had worked at Home Hardware in St. Jacob's for many years so I became friends with some merchandisers in the industry. I just phoned and asked for their help," she explains. "There were four of us that came together to work on the store, and we opened on June 15th."

With a prime business location on the main square and a tourist population that fluctuates between 200,000 and 250,000 visitors every year, today Donna-Marie smiles and happily says that "business has been awesome."

Her suppliers concur. Clark Cooper of Waterford Wedgwood says "Donna Marie is a unique individual. We have been doing business together for three years. When she first contacted me about opening up a business in Goderich, I was skeptical. I thought 'oh lady, do you know what you are getting into?' Not only was I wrong, my business with *The Culinary Poet* is growing faster than with any other store in my stable of customers."

The Culinary Poet was also the fastest growing account in her first year for Le Creuset. Sales rep Emil Rocha recalls: "When I first walked in to *The Culinary Poet* I thought, wow, what a classy, upscale store. I knew this was a place where Le Creuset would be stunningly displayed and showcased. It truly is the best looking store in Goderich, with knowledgeable staff always wanting to help. Donna-Marie has a flare for design and merchandising and always finds very unique items."

Donna-Marie shares credit for her success with her full-time staffer Jodi Machan and part timer Sarah Eveland.

"I have known Jodi for about 20 years," she tells *Home Style*. "She treats the store like it is her own and the customers love her. My husband and I live in Port Albert, a small town about 16 km away. In the winter, the highway can be closed on occasion. Jodi keeps tabs on the weather, walks to the store and opens it whether she is scheduled to work or not."

Wüstof sales representative Harvey Geiger also finds Donna-Marie a pleasure to work with. "Her staff are very personable and knowledgeable. She is open to suggestions and invites the sales

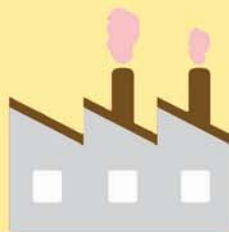
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Independent Retailer Profile

Right: a free-standing display of Staub cast iron cookware draws customers to the centre of the store. Shown below, a display of locally-sourced woodenware and the store's knife assortment, which is kept under lock and key for safety.



store experience, so she has no plans to sell online at this time.

"We advertise with radio stations and these commercials extend as far North as Owen Sound, South to Grand Bend and over to Exeter."

Donna-Marie feels that advertising steadily has contributed a great deal to her success. She places ads in tourist papers like the *Day Tripper* and other local papers. They are even doing television commercials on CTV.

Working in retail for so long has given Donna-Marie a number of insights and the ability to meet any new challenge head on.

"In retail, you usually have a strong spot and a dead spot," she explains. "We don't have a dead spot in our store. I jump all over the map because there is no one best selling item. One day its dinnerware flying off the shelves and the next day it could be gadgets."

She has found a few favourite suppliers who have been 'her strength'.

There are two other kitchen shops in Goderich but none of them carry the extensive assortment found in *The Culinary Poet*. Donna-Marie's assortment goes deeper than most and they are probably the only one that does a significant volume in tableware. Colourful walls, specially selected music and ambient lighting make this store special.

Having gained most of her retail experience at Home Hardware, Donna-Marie admits she really loves this particular dealer network.

"When I gave up my job as a manager in the furniture division, I told my employer I did not want to be in retail the rest of my life," says Donna-Marie. "Then this store suddenly became available. I really didn't have a chance to tell anyone what I was doing. One day my former employer poked his head inside the doorway and said 'kind of gets in your blood doesn't it,'" she says with a laugh.

Donna-Marie believes as a retailer, you should always be in transition. "I'm always looking for new product and ways to improve the store. But most of all, I'm having fun doing what I am

reps to come in for store demos."

The Culinary Poet occupies only 1,000 square feet and carries 5,500 SKUs but the small space packs a visual punch.

"I would love to expand but there are not that many spaces around much bigger than we are now," says Donna-Marie. "I definitely don't want to leave 'the square' with all its walk-by traffic but I would love to offer cooking classes. My current space is just too limited."

All buying for the store is done by Donna-Marie, who jokes she had to open a kitchen shop because she no longer had room at home for all her 'toys'.

"I do like gadgets, and I make sure to find something at a price that will appeal to my customers," she says. "I chuckle at the number of people that walk in and say 'oh this is a high end store, I can't afford it' but once we get talking, they realize we have something for everyone."

While tourist business is great, Donna-Marie is also supported by her loyal local community shoppers. "Our customers bring their friends in the store and encourage them to buy something. We are lucky to have a healthy combination of regular shoppers and tourists."

Donna-Marie uses social media to promote the store but she feels strongly that the essence of her shop is the in





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Independent Retailer Profile

doing. *The Culinary Poet* makes that possible.”

She also keeps busy as part of Goderich’s BIA and participates in the IODE Christmas Home Tour by setting up a complete dining room in two houses on the tour.

Donna-Marie is having fun because she loves what she is doing. She has always enjoyed cooking and entertaining. Whipping up a meal for 75 people does not phase her one bit.

“I feel that too many people jump into retail without any experience or even passion for what they are doing, or the products they are selling,” says Donna-Marie. “They think retail is easy but it’s not. It’s a huge multi-tasking job, and not everyone can handle it.”

Another positive aspect to retail is the fact that she is her own boss at the age of 56. She’s finally making her own choices and not having anyone above her telling her she can’t do something.



The Culinary Poet has been an important account for Le Creuset, where sales of the high end cookware have increased dramatically since opening in 2012.

“I think many women in their 50s have reached a stage where they are tired of working for someone else.”

Since Donna-Marie is just getting started in a career she loves, she has no plans to retire anytime soon.

“My husband and I both get bored easily,” she says. “We will continue to work for a long time. I have been bouncing back to retail since I was a kid and now I am exactly where I want to be.”

Everyone should be lucky enough to be exactly where they want to be in life. For Donna-Marie, that means working with a customer in her shop in the lovely main square of Goderich, Ontario. Royalty may never have set foot in this town, but *The Culinary Poet* is clearly the reigning kitchen shop in one of the prettiest towns in Canada. 🐾

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Countertop cooking

What's hot in toasters, cookers, fryers, ovens, grills and more



Breville's new Smart Oven Pro countertop oven uses Element IQ technology to orchestrate the five electronic quartz heating elements to move heat when and where it's needed most. A 'Slow Cook' function uses the convection heating system to evenly cook from above and below, simmering food on "high or low" from four to 10 hours. The oven's built-in convection fan can accelerate the cooking process by as much as 30%. It features 10 convenient pre-set cooking functions from toast to reheat.

Breville's new Risotto Plus, shown right, makes stir-free risotto, quinoa, and fluffy rice, all in the same bowl. This multi-cooker comes with sauté settings in order to caramelize fresh ingredients. The 10-cup unit has easy pre-set functions including Risotto, Sauté, Rice, Steam, Slow Cook Low, Slow Cook High, and Auto Keep Warm.



Breville's four slice Smart Wafflemaker uses Waffle IQ Technology and 12 different browning control settings, including a Smart Waffle option to customize according to taste! Thermal engineered heating elements ensure even heat distribution. A timer and progress indicator counts down once the lid is closed.



This new 15-quart Rival smoker/roaster oven from Jarden is designed for the ultimate meat lover. Convenient and versatile, users can smoke up delicious flavour with a wood chip insert for outdoor cooking. This oven can even roast a 20-lb turkey.



Jarden's Oster brand has launched a new line of DuraCeramic products. The line includes a 12-inch skillet, 2-slice panini maker (shown) and 10 x 18-inch griddle. All units have metal handles with stay cool grips and DuraCeramic non-stick natural ceramic coating which is 4x more durable than standard coatings.



Crock-Pot has added two new additions to the popular Hook Up connectible entertaining system. A buffet warmer and 5-quart round slow cooker now plug into up to four other units. Each one has removable stoneware and a glass lid. They stack easily in the cupboard, left.

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Countertop cooking



KitchenAid is celebrating 95 years of innovation with the launch of new countertop appliances in the blending, craft coffee, toaster and stand mixer categories. New countertop appliances include three Long Slot Toasters. Shown left, the new toasters offer increased functionality and seamless design featuring a long slot and extra wide 1½-inch slots to accommodate everything from English muffins and breakfast pastries to thickly-sliced artisan breads. Additional details include an easy-to-clean, smudge-resistant metal housing and push to release crumb tray. The toasters are available in Contour Silver, Empire Red (shown) and Onyx Black.



Cuisinart's Chef's Convection Oven boasts 15 cooking functions and special settings for speed convection, sandwiches and bagels. Heating power of 1875 watts provides quick heat up time, precise temperature and perfect results every time. The easy-clean nonstick interior can hold a 13-inch pizza or an entire 9-pound chicken. The new Combo Steam and Convection Oven, below, offers nine single and combination functions. Steam heat cuts cooking time up to 40% and the broil or bake function will create roasts that are beautifully browned on the outside and moist inside. Cuisinart has also launched a new rotisserie toaster oven (not shown).



The Jet Stream 2 Oven by **Nesco** is a 6-in-1 healthy cooking system. It allows the user to roast, grill, bake, steam, broil and air fry all without adding fat or oil. With 1200 Watts of power The Jet Stream 2 is faster than standard conventional and convection ovens. It cooks about as fast as a microwave oven but with superior food quality, taste and appearance. The digital keypad has two fan speeds and nine temperature presets.



convenient hinged lid is removable for cleaning. Also new from Nesco is this 8-inch square electric skillet is perfect for singles or college students. A deep interior allows for roasting or frying. It features die cast aluminum construction, heat resistant, stay-cool handles and a premium Whitford non-stick interior. And to celebrate its 95th anniversary this year, Nesco will continue to promote its special edition roaster in candy apple red (not shown).



The Nesco 5-in-1 Quick Cook system will speed cook, steam, brown, slow cook and make rice. It has a 6-litre capacity and 1000 watts of power. The





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Countertop cooking



Hamilton Beach is uncluttering the potluck table with the Connectables slow cooker. The cube-shaped design has folding handles and is 20% narrower than standard 4-quart slow cookers. The built-in lid rest lets user neatly arrange the table for clutter-free serving. An extra power outlet is built-in so multiple slow cookers can sit side-by-side for additional serving capacity. Also new from Hamilton Beach this year is the MultiGrill indoor grill, below. It offers three ways to cook with dual cooking surfaces: grill mode, griddle mode or bacon mode. The adjustable temperature offers more control when cooking. It's easy to clean with a removable drip tray and dishwasher-safe grilling plates.



This Hamilton Beach professional style deep fryer, left, includes one large basket and two smaller ones with a total 12-cup capacity to feed a crowd. An immersed heating element provides fast heating and cooking. Easy to assemble, use and clean, the unit comes with an adjustable timer and audible tone, power light, ready light and a viewing window on the lid.



After ten years of research and 22 patents, T-fal is launching its second generation Actifry. Now faster, more powerful, the re-engineered Actifry Express will make its Canadian debut this fall in a 1 KG and 1.5 KG capacity. A new aerodynamic chamber improves air flow and keeps the internal temperature consistent. Combined with a larger turbine that propels more hot air, it ensures faster results. With no need to preheat, the new Actifry Express helps families prepare favourite dishes up to 25% faster.

T-fal's new 10-in-1 multi-cooker uses Fuzzy Logic technology to ensure cooking perfection with every recipe. The 10 cooking programs can make everything from risotto to home-made yogurt. It has a 24-hour delayed start and programmable time adjustment. Food is always ready to eat with a keep warm function. The 10 cup non-stick ceramic pot is dishwasher safe and comes with a steam basket, rice spoon, soup spoon and measuring cup.





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Countertop cooking



This portable induction cooktop from **Salton** is extremely fast, safe and efficient. Now available for domestic use, it's more energy-efficient than conventional cooking with no heat loss to surrounding area. Safeguard technology prevents operation without cookware. It has a 3-hour timer and auto shut-off.



The S'Mores maker by Salton can make the delicious treats anywhere, anytime. No campfire needed. The indoor heating element has no open flame for safety. It can toast marshmallows in about two minutes. The serving tray doubles as a veggie platter with four compartments.

The modern design of this new **Excalibur** dehydrator adds a touch of colour to any kitchen. Featuring high performance air-flow mechanics with a polycarbonate interior, it's ideal for families, hunters or for pet treats. It has nine large trays and mesh screens that are BPA-free. The temperature range is high enough to make meat jerky.



The EXC10EL dehydrator, left, combines beauty and modern design with a stainless steel interior and exterior. It also features a 99-hour timer, 10 large stainless steel trays and Excalibur's patented Paralex horizontal air flow and hyperwave fluctuation technology for an efficient heat-dry combination.



Model 3526TCDB, right, has a clear door and five large trays, an adjustable thermostat and 26-hour timer. The unit turns on automatically when the timer is in use. It provides 440 watts of power and has a 5-inch fan and mesh screen. Distributed in Canada by **TFG Concepts**.



All-Clad's electric slow cooker comes in two versatile sizes – 4-quart and 6.5-quart with a removable ceramic insert. It provides gentle, uniform heat and keeps the finished dish warm.

This beautifully polished stainless steel 4-slice Belgian waffle-maker by All-Clad that makes thick, golden, fluffy waffles with deep pockets to hold syrup. The advanced heating technology ensures perfectly consistent baking and browning, and the steam-release system prevents condensation build-up.



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Blades of glory

The latest in cutlery, knives, sharpeners and cutting boards



Browne is launching the new MinoSharp ceramic water sharpener, above left. It sharpens knife blade with a coarse grit whetstone wheel, then finishes it with the medium grit. Simple and effective. A new cutting board from Berard, left, is available in three sizes, each artfully crafted from Robinia wood. The hardwood is gentle on knives and resistant to deterioration. Also new from Browne is the beautiful Global Ni collection, shown above. These unique knives feature a longer, precision-weighted hollow handle for balance. The rounded spine ensures a controlled, comfortable grip and the thick, Oriental-style Cromova 18 stainless steel blade is honed to a precise, sharp edge.

The Fibrox Pro collection from **Victorinox** is now available for the home chef. These knives are made from high-carbon, no-stain steel with ergonomic nylon handles that offer a comfortable, conforming grip. The knife is designed to minimize wrist tension and has a lifetime warranty.



Forged and designed from German steel, this Professional series of cutlery sets from **KitchenAid** are expertly crafted for style and dependability. The knives feature triple-rivet han-

dles, ice-temp hardened blades and a diamond grit sharpener. They come in a choice of uniquely painted, die-cast coloured blocks, made in the U.S. with the distinctive KitchenAid look.





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Knives & Cutting Boards



DanESCO is featuring two new products by Joseph Joseph. The Index chopping set, left, is now available in a mini-version.

It's designed to prevent cross-contamination.

The Slice & Sharpen cutting board, below, comes with an integrated ceramic knife sharpener and is now offered in beech wood. A non-slip rubber edge keeps the board in place.



These versatile knife sets from **Paderno** are available in three colours and includes a variety of knives. The coated handles provide a comfortable grip and are dishwasher safe. Durable, stainless blades will stay sharp, and the universal knife block holds most kitchen knives for storage. Backed by Paderno's 25-year warranty, each set includes 3.5-inch paring knife, 5-inch utility knife, carving knife, chef knife and bread knife.



The Splash Photoreal knife series from **Hampton Forge** comes with bright-coloured handles and printed blades that feature life-like images of fruits and vegetables. It's one of the hottest culinary trends this season and this line is available in five different shapes as well as a two-piece cutlery set.



Cuisinart is launching the Elite Pro Forged Triple Rivet cutlery set. The knives feature high carbon German stainless steel blades for precision and accuracy. Packaged in a 15-piece block set, these knives have tapered ground blades that narrow gradually to an extremely sharp, fine edge. Constructed for perfect stability and control, the knives are designed with an extra-wide forged safety bolster and stainless steel rivets securing the blade to the premium white handles.



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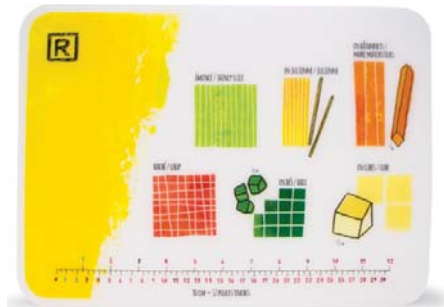
Knives & Cutting Boards



The new **RICARDO** line for kids includes a Santoku knife and a non-slip cutting mat. The knife, shown above, is ideal for smaller hands. The ergonomically-shaped handle has a soft-touch finish for safer handling and antibacterial protection. It is sold with a protective sheath and its high carbon stainless steel blade keeps its edge with minimal maintenance.

The cutting mat, left, is flexible so the user can easily transfer chopped food into a bowl or a pan. It is made of polypropylene that will not dull blades

and has a safe non-slip base. The life-sized illustrations are perfect for teaching kids different cutting techniques and helping them with measurements.



Swissmar is showcasing this beautiful Acacia wood board set, above. The board features an elegant wood grain and comes with a stainless steel moist cheese knife. The knife is designed to prevent moist cheese from sticking to it. It can be stored within the board in a cut-out area secured with a magnet. The versatile knife can be used on both sizes. It measures 11 inches by 7.25-inches.



Zwilling J.A. Henckels recently introduced four new knives under popular Zwilling Pro series. The 5-inch Pro Bread/Bagel knife, far left and 5.5-inch Pro Petty/Prep knife (not shown) are both equipped with Zwilling's breakthrough scalloped edge, enable easy cutting even through tough crusts and soft skins with minimal damage to food. The 8-inch Chef's knife, right, combines Pro's innovative bolster design with a traditional blade shape and a scalloped edge for cooks who seek a more traditional cutting experience. Finally, the 7-inch rocking Santoku knife, centre, is designed to accommodate both Western rocking and Asian chopping motions. It's perfect for fish, meats and vegetables.



This stylish new 3-piece Acacia knife set from **Swissmar** adds a touch of elegance to any cheese tray. The Acacia wood handles make these cheese knives very functional and comfortable to hold. Each is designed for a specific use: a cleaver for hard cheeses, a moist cheese knife and a parmesan cheese knife. Both sets will be available this October.



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Knives & Cutting Boards

Victorinox partners with Epicurean

Victorinox Swiss Army has announced it will purchase an investment stake in Epicurean Cutting Surfaces. The partnership is said to be a result of their shared commitment to innovation, quality and customer-first business values.

"Our complementary product assortments made this partnership a natural fit, however, product synergies alone don't make for a successful business relationship," says René Stutz, CEO of Victorinox Swiss Army North America. "Over the years, a mutual respect has developed between our two brands; and understandably so. We at Victorinox have long admired Epicurean's nimble innovation and fresh perspective, which is infused in everything they do. We share a commitment to quality – we do it right, or we don't do it at all. That makes Epicurean exactly the kind of brand we want to work with."

Both companies will continue to operate in the manner they currently do, however, the investment will open new collaboration opportunities. Victorinox's strengths lie within the commercial cutlery arena and international markets, while Epicurean's domestic retail business is strong. The two plan to tap into best practices and customer networks on those fronts.

"High quality products, industry-leading innovation, and a brand we're proud to stand behind – those are the tenets of the Epicurean brand that are also reflected in the way Victorinox Swiss Army has approached its business for more than 130 years. Having the opportunity to team up with a brand that's been doing things that way with great success for more than a century only furthers our efforts. And now that our two companies are 'officially' partners we couldn't be happier," says Epicurean co-founders Dave Benson, Greg Benson and Tony Ciardelli.

The deal should close September 1.



Traditional, Mediterranean and Asian cuisines have one thing in common – there's always chopping to do! This was **WÜSTHOF's** inspiration for the new third edition Kitchen Surfer knife, above. A hybrid between a cook's knife and a Japanese-style santoku, the blade is shorter in length making it easier to use, while the bigger handle helps with control. Also new is the PRO 8-inch chef's knife, below. It's built exclusively for the tough day-to-day demands of the busy professional kitchen. Designed to match high performance with comfort, the rigid core gives the knife stability, while soft, slip-resistant rubber keeps the grip tight. The blade is expertly crafted from high carbon, stain-resistant steel that is designed to keep its edge.



Abbott offers several cutting boards in its fall line-up. Made of brown Acacia wood, the range includes a long slim board, shown above, and a square board, each with a strap. There is also a square pizza board and an extra large size with strap.



Fox Run Brands is launching the new Michael Symon line of cutlery. Made of high carbon German steel, the knives feature handles made from G10 Fiberglass Resin. It's highly polished and has a double rivet design. The precision-ground blades ensure precise cuts. Full tang and abbreviated bolster offers sharpness and balance.

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KitchenAid®

Best in Barware

What's new in wine and cocktail accessories



Trudeau introduces the new Platinum edition Elite wine Aerator, right. Stylish and streamlined, it offers the equivalent effect of 30 minutes in a traditional decanter. The dripless, stainless steel-accented Tritan spout attaches to the wine bottle and works easily with just one hand. It will boost an injection of air into the wine as you pour to improve both the bouquet and flavour of the wine, one glass at a time. It comes with an attractive base for display and storage.

On a more whimsical note, Trudeau has also launched a new set of 12 Daisy wine charms in assorted colours, shown above. Made entirely of silicone, they adjust to all stemware sizes.



Paderno's new recipe cocktail shaker provides easy measurement for any cocktail with glass bottom and stainless steel top.



The TwinVin from **Product Specialties**, left, offers two hand-blown glasses in one; one end is for reds and the other for whites. The space saving design takes up half the footprint of two wine glasses.

Marked with ounce and milliliter increments, the Yarai Jigger, right, is perfect for mixing favourite cocktails. The spout allows for easy pouring into glasses or mixing vessels without messy drips. It's made with heavy thick walled glass and a classic Japanese Yarai weave-pattern.

These convenient 3-in-1 measuring jigger, bottle stopper & shot glasses have a spout to prevent drips and spills. Measurement markings are in imperial and metric and the silicone seal fits most bottles. Available in each style in tube packaging or in a set of four (without skull head).



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Best in Barware

Cuisivin's metallic markers provide an easy way for guests to leave their mark on wine glasses. The non-toxic, instant drying markers wipe clean with a damp cloth.



The Lucaris Desire collection of crystal stemware, below, features a unique design called Aerlumer. The bottom curl ridges at the bowl encourages aeration and softens wine as it gently brushes against the ridged bowl to unlock aroma.



Cuisivin's new SensisPlus Sky line by Eisch is now available in an attractive gift box. Each glass features one-piece, pulled-stem construction with an elegant design.



Abbott offers a range of barware and glassware for the retail market. Shown above, the Chisel line features a gold hammered base and comes in three sizes.

Also new from Abbott is this contemporary bar set below. The set features a bottle opener and a traditional corkscrew, packaged for gift giving with a handsome copper handle.



Swissmar unveiled the Nuance line of wine and bar accessories this summer.

Shown above, the corkscrew set in black and metal. Shown left, the 54-ounce Penguin Pitcher has a sleek design.



It comes in black, blue or copper with a black silicone handle. A removable ice filter retains ice cubes or fruit slices when pouring.



The Nuance hip flask features a large screw down cap. Its available in black rubber with a coated finish.

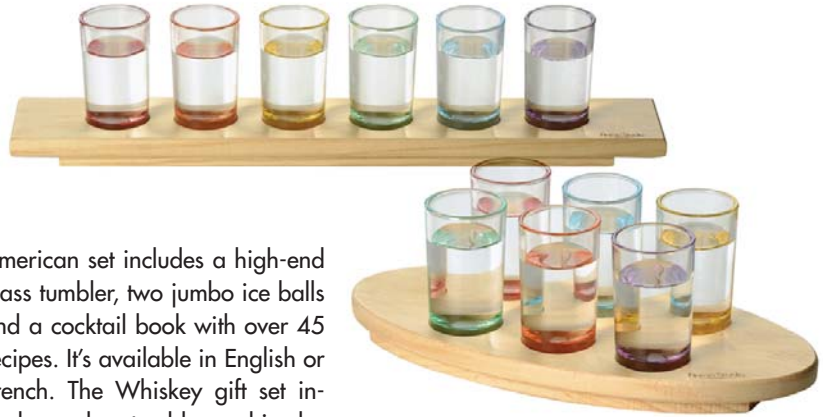
Best in Barware

DanESCO offers a wide range of bar accessories. The Salut shot glass set, right, is ideal for shots, liqueurs or mini desserts. Each glass fits securely into a recessed wood base making the platter easy to pick up even when all the glasses are full. Each glass is hand-painted with a jewel tone base and offered in sets of six.

The Artland beer glass set from DanESCO, shown below, is designed to bring out the best in beer. Whether enjoying a new IPA or a local stout, the glasses are perfect for any occasion and also make a great gift for the beer lover.

Also new from DanESCO are two Prepara bar sets, shown below right. The

American set includes a high-end glass tumbler, two jumbo ice balls and a cocktail book with over 45 recipes. It's available in English or French. The Whiskey gift set includes a glass tumbler and jumbo ice ball. Both sets are packaged for gift giving.



The Sloe Gin cocktail is making a come-back and **Port-Style** has the perfect gift set. The Kilner Sloe Gin set, right, provides all the essentials to make this special cocktail, including a detailed recipe card. Also new from Port-Style this year is the Maison Plus line of oversized, extra-large wine glass decanters, shown far right. Available in four styles, the glass allows wine to breath before guests sit down for dinner. The style available include a bulbous red wine shape and a traditional tall white wine shape, with capacity ranging from 1.5 to 1.75 litres.



Gourmet debuts at Las Vegas Market



When I travelled to Las Vegas on August 2nd for my first visit to the World Market Centre, I had no idea what to expect. The Las Vegas Market is now in year three of an ambitious rejuvenation plan and the only thing I knew for sure was that they had selected the perfect person to oversee the project: Dorothy Belshaw. Having spent 20 years with George Little Management and the Gourmet Show, Dorothy is a smart, hard-working visionary who understands the trade show business better than most.

Held twice a year (the spring edition is in January), this edition of the Market featured an expanded assortment of gourmet housewares products with the official opening of C11 (below right). While the lower floors housed permanent showrooms featuring home decor, giftware, tableware, the 11th floor will focus on culinary items. Though there is still plenty of room for growth, cate-

gories now include small electrics, cookware, gadgets and kitchen tools, tabletop, linens and shelf-stable foods. As well, huge Pavilions featured 'Discoveries', a new temporary exhibit venue at the market with 90,000 square feet of exhibit space.

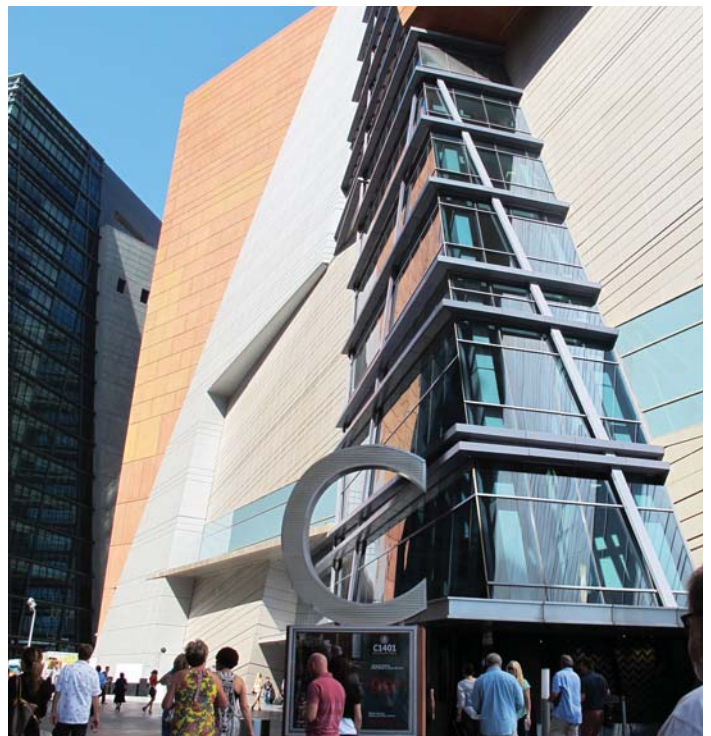
Dorothy's vision is to turn the IMC (International Market Center) into a viable, centralized western shopping opportunity for retailers. Her three-year plan involved developing a comprehensive gift market alongside furniture and home accessory offerings, culminating in the debut of the gourmet marketplace on floor C11. She understands that the way consumers give gifts has changed over the past decade and diversification is the key to success in the market.

Her concept seems to be working. Attendance at this summer market was up 5% over last year and gift continued its double-digit, year-over-year growth with a 17% increase. Overall, attendance

has jumped 180% since January 2012.

Several vendors showcasing products for the first time at this market said they liked the idea of a west coast market to reach gourmet housewares stores that may not want to travel to similar markets in Atlanta or New York. A few housewares companies – including Jura, Waterford-Wedgwood and Lenox – have permanent showroom space in Building C on the 1st floor.

For Canadian retailers on the west coast looking to differentiate themselves, Las Vegas offers a variety of handmade goods and unusual giftware and home accessories. And though the city was in the midst of a heat wave (108°F each day), show organizers in this concrete jungle provided visitors with plenty of ways to keep cool, from free bottles of cold water and complimentary cocktails on every floor to 'fan misters' along the walkway. It made for a very comfortable shopping trip.—L.O.





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Show Highlights

PRODUCT TRENDS



Canvas Home introduced this simple but stylish tableware in basic white or cream.



Plenty of fish were on display in Vegas, including this Lake Fish tableware design by Abbiamo Tutto. Made in Italy.



Mitchell Black offers a wide selection of serveware made of porcelain and trimmed in platinum featuring historical images.



A classic road bike silhouette is hand screen printed onto glassware in a variety of colours from Vital Industries.

Although most of the new housewares and gourmet exhibitors were located on the 11th floor of C Building, some companies, such as Jura, right, had permanent showrooms on the main floor. The vendors showcased innovative new gift ideas as well as display concepts.



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CanGift explores show options

I don't envy the Canadian Gift Association. They have a lot of tough decisions to make with the Toronto Gift Fair, held August 9th to 12th. Housewares exhibitors, in particular, are considering what action to take after the fair has reversed its earlier decision to drop the length of the January show to four days. Most want to see a shorter show, and many would like to see just one show a year, but CanGift represents hundreds of members in a variety of categories. Keeping everyone happy is impossible.

The show is in the midst of a transformation as organizers explore their options. There is no question the number of attendees is on the decline, as is the number of exhibitors, but how do you attract new ones in a shrinking marketplace? Shows can be expensive, and companies today want a definite return on their investment in order to commit.

Then there is the question of the timing. Weather can be a factor in January, and next year the show overlaps directly with NY NOW, so there may be good

reason to delay the decision about length. It will also be good to get more input from retailers on both length and timing. From a housewares perspective, I know many store owners from outside Ontario now only travel to Toronto for one of the two gift shows, balancing it out with a visit to either Chicago, Atlanta or New York.

Would it be possible to have a separate wing for kitchen and housewares, with independent demo areas and seminars, and a shorter/different timeframe? Or are there too few housewares vendors left to provide any real clout?

This is an organization that must be accountable to a board of directors, and right now there are no housewares vendors on that board. But CanGift's new president, Anita Schachter, has been in this business a long time and I think she will weigh the results and make a fair decision along with her show management team. With so many key brand names, housewares cannot be ignored, but we aren't the only voice. - L.O.

In late July, CanGift announced that the January edition of the Toronto Gift Fair would be shortened to four days from its present five-day format in response to membership demand. However, shortly after the August fair closed, the association released the following statement:

"Since the 4-day decision was announced, members across all categories and booth sizes have voiced in on this important issue. The Board of Directors and CanGift staff have listened to members' feedback and reviewed the effects of such a decision. The board weighed a number of factors including the effect on show traffic due to severe winter weather, conflicts with other shows such as NYE Now, the quality of buyers who have traditionally attended the second last day of the show, and the amount of order writing they represent to members. Following conversations on site with members of all sizes, it became apparent that many members had not considered these factors when completing the initial survey.

"After careful consideration of all these factors, the Board of Directors has decided to maintain the January 2016 Toronto Gift Fair at 5 days.

"Over the next few months, the association will be working with an independent research company who will be undertaking an extensive campaign to contact each member to solicit their views on the length of the January show. Additionally, we will be initiating research with retailers to obtain their views on the subject. We recognize that meeting our retailers' needs will result in our members' continuing success. We anticipate the data will provide a broader perspective and offer additional insight that will be used to analyze this issue."



Though it is in need of a facelift, the Toronto Gift Fair is an integral event in the trade show calendar and independent retailers across Canada depend on it for most of their buying needs. Moving the Kitchen Spotlight feature area to Hall 7 for the August show is a step in the right direction.

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Toronto Gift Fair Highlights



David Peters of InterContinental Mercantile and Arlen Gould show off the new Ekobrew single serve coffeemaker.



Monty Grunebaum of Port-Style Enterprises with Sigrid Wolm of From the Kitchen to the Table in Orangeville, Ontario.



Bill Marshall of Zwilling J.A. Henckels with Yvette Welsh and Eva Janousek of Zest Kitchenware in Calgary.



Brian Schachter and Jennifer Schachter demonstrate Counseltron's new mandoline.



Vince Menchella of iQ Living with Anji Levy of Groupe SEB/All Clad.



Jogi Sudnik of Jolanta Interiors with Derek Marcotte of Wüsthof Canada.



Phyllis Kramer of The Keeping Room gives a hug to Ian Lafayette. Sadly, this marked the last Toronto Gift Fair for Ian as he prepares to retire at the end of the year.

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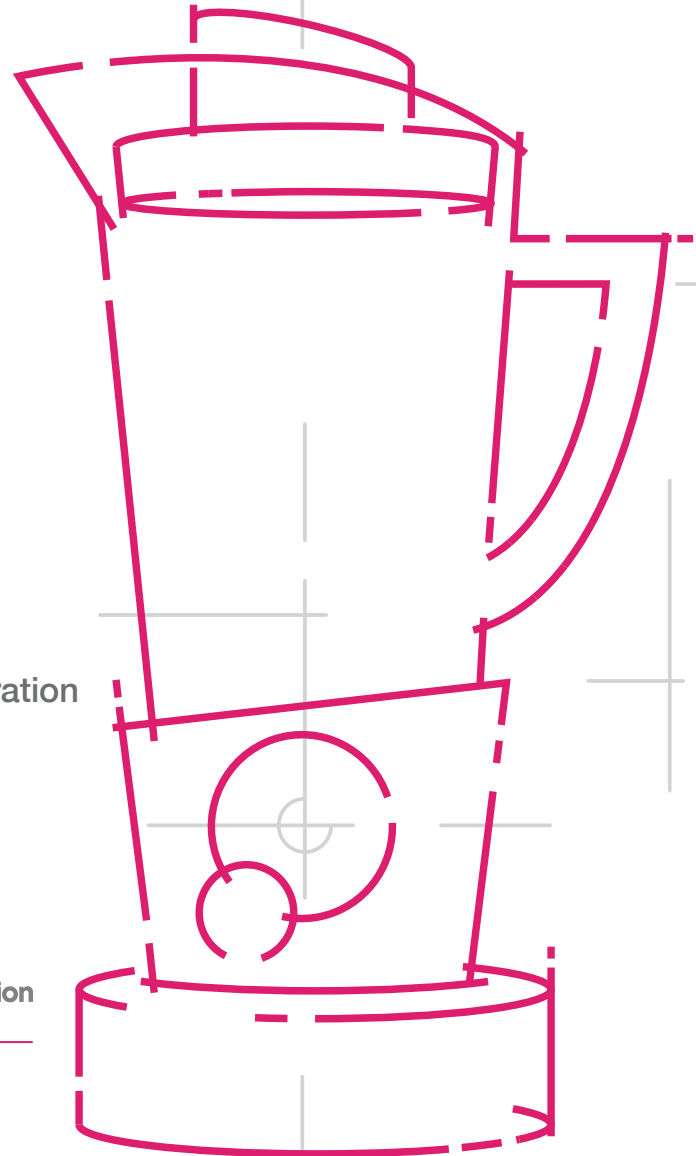
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The best of both worlds at NY NOW

Survival in today's retail environment requires thinking outside of the box and for independent store owners, NY NOW offers plenty of opportunities to expand beyond basic kitchenware. Though gourmet housewares as a category continues to grow at this semi-annual event – held every January and August – there is so much more to see in textiles, giftware and home decor.

The latest show, held August 16th to 20th at the Jacob Javits Centre in Manhattan, featured all the latest trends, from hammered metal tableware to rustic decor in unfinished woods and natural materials. Barware was big, with Corksicle unveiling a new range of thermal drinkware and innovative new aerating devices for wine lovers. Colours were muted, with an emphasis on pale blues, greens and the ever-present turquoise. The seaside was another recurring theme in tabletop.

The Home Collection at NY NOW featured over 1,000 exhibitors, with 2,600 exhibitors in total. The show welcomes 43,000 attendees from 70 countries. Next year's spring edition is scheduled for January 30th to February 3rd (running concurrently with the Toronto Gift Fair.)



THE MARKET FOR HOME, LIFESTYLE + GIFT

NY NOW has introduced a new logo and tagline – *the Market for Home, Lifestyle + Gift*. The new tagline reintroduces the word “gift” to the show's branding and positioning. The official name is NY NOW, *The Market for Home, Lifestyle + Gift*.

“Gift is the largest of four sections presented as part of NY NOW's LIFESTYLE Collection, and it is one of the largest of NY NOW's eleven sections overall,” says Scott Kramer, NY NOW co-director and vice president. “The addition of ‘Gift’ to the tagline is representative of the breadth and depth of giftware products presented at NY NOW.”



Above, the Jacob Javits Center, home of NY NOW, now features a unique sanctuary of green space on the rooftop harboring wildlife and saving energy.



The Chevalier collection includes this stemless aerating wine glass. Simply uncork the wine and pour into the vessel in the centre of the glass to enhance flavour and aroma.



Arbiter displayed this striking collection of Italian-designed glassware.



Corksicle launched a new Canteen and Tumbler thermal beverage line. A triple wall of insulation keeps drinks cold for 25 hours. Offered in a variety of vivid colours.



One of the themes this year was the seaside, as seen in this cool starfish line of casual tableware from Carmel Ceramica.



These ceramic coil fruit baskets are hand crafted by Brooklyn artisan Virginia Sin.

Typhoon takes home top award in gourmet



Shown left to right: Marc Delman, sales manager for HOME (Tabletop & Gourmet Housewares) presents the summer 2015 Tabletop + Gourmet Housewares Show Best New Product Awards to David Reiss, president of Coltellerie Berti for MATCH; Richard Stevenson, International Sales Manager of Typhoon Homewares; Daniel Kalliontzis, CEO of AvoSeedo; Mr. Tatsu Yamasaki, CEO of Zojirushi America Corporation; and Jerry Chang, Founder of IPPINKA.

Typhoon Homewares' new Skandi cast iron casserole has earned the "Best of Market" honor in the NY Now Tabletop + Gourmet Housewares Best New Product Awards. Winners were recognized in four categories for housewares – cooking, dining, gourmet accessories and kitchen preparation.

"The slate of winners and finalists for the Tabletop + Gourmet Housewares Best New Product Awards represents exciting new advances in design and utility," said Marc Delman, NY Now's Tabletop + Gourmet Housewares sales manager. "This suite of exceptional products points to the incredible diversity in form and function showcased by NY Now exhibitors."

Judges for the Best New Product Awards were: Lisa Cowley and Stacey Goldberg of *HomeWorld Business* and *Gourmet Insider*; Sharon Franke of *Good Housekeeping*; Laurie O'Halloran of *Home Style*; Alison Zisko of *HFN*; Amy Stavis of *Tableware Today*; and Anna Wolfe of *The Gourmet Retailer*.

NY Now's winners and finalists for the summer 2015 Tabletop + Gourmet Housewares Best New Product Awards are:

- **Best of Market: Typhoon Homewares** for its Skandi cast iron casserole, a pre-seasoned cast iron casserole with porcelain lid.
- **Cookware: Zojirushi America Corporation** for its Fresh Brew Plus thermal carafe coffee maker, model EC-YSC100.
- **Dining: Ippinka** for its Grab Opener.
- **Gourmet Accessories: AvoSeedo** for its AvoSeedo. Finalists: ADK Packworks for its floral market basket; and Rolser for its COM MF 8 shopping cart.
- **Kitchen Preparation: Coltellerie Berti** for Match for its Nocciola knife.



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Chris Clement

Partner, Clement & Associates Marketing



Even though he is recognized as one of the best reps in the province, Chris Clement doesn't think of himself as just a 'sales person'. He likes to think of himself as a 'service provider', and it's that attitude that has helped make his family-owned agency an integral part of the housewares industry in Alberta for the past 15 years.

Back in 1999, Chris' parents, Marietta and Doug, were both in Edmonton, working at jobs they no longer loved. Marietta was in retail and had a home decor background. Doug worked in the fast-paced corporate world. Both were ready for a change.

At the same time, Chris was looking for a new start himself. Although he enjoyed his job as a popular on-air radio personality in Edmonton – and he certainly has the voice for it – Chris felt it was time to 'grow up and get a real job'.

While the three of them pondered their future, Marietta noticed an ad in the local paper. A giftware company called United Design, located in Norwich, Ontario, was looking for sales representation in Alberta. The ad immediately piqued Marietta's interest since Norwich was where her parents lived, and where she had grown up. It seemed to be fate, and even though they had never specifically sold to retailers before, the Clements were hired.

Clements & Associates Marketing was officially launched in the spring of 2000 and the three partners hit the road, calling on retailers across northern and central Alberta.

As they became more familiar with the market, they started taking on more suppliers and expanded their territory to cover the entire province. Each partner was responsible for their own area and the three worked well together, meeting regularly and gradually growing their business. But Chris admits there were a few challenges at the beginning.

"When you're new to any industry, there's quite a learning curve," he says. "We were virtually unknown to many customers and were calling on some retail accounts who had not seen a rep in a while."

And despite the fact that Chris had spent many years on the radio, he is a bit of an introvert. He discovered that sitting by yourself behind a microphone in a radio studio is not the same as having to sell to someone face to face. Initially it was a struggle but he persevered and soon his quiet, professional approach won over his customers.

Marietta has a kind, caring, thoughtful sales manner while Doug is more outgoing and a progressive thinker. Chris says he's learned a great deal from both of them and together, they built the agency by moving into more housewares. They had Paderno and Abbott for a time, and today they represent Trudeau, Victorinox, Random House Books, Premier Gift/Orange Crate/Scanttrade and Upper Canada Soap. Their territory has also expanded with some retail accounts and now includes the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and parts of B.C.

"We enjoy selling products that people actually use," Chris says. "These are functional items that consumers need in their homes. The giftware industry has more to do with style and look but housewares are more technical."

Chris stresses that it's important to know your products and understand how they fit into the customer's store. The Clements pride themselves on their ability to provide the right fit for every retailer.

"I'm not a pushy, overbearing sales person," he says. "I take the approach that I'm providing a necessary service to retailers in Alberta. We're providing the products retailers need to sell to their customers and be successful."

It's a strategy that has earned him the respect of his customers and suppliers. According to Edmonton retailer Darcy Kaser of *Call The Kettle Black*: "Chris is professional, incredibly engaging, friendly, reliable, and patient. I always feel that he is trying his absolute best and always has our best interests in mind."

After 15 years in housewares, Chris says he can't imagine doing anything else. He loves the variety that this industry provides and could never imagine sitting behind a

computer at a desk job. Yes, there have been some setbacks economically in Alberta this year but he's optimistic there is still plenty of business to go around.

Doug and Marietta, on the other hand, decided last year that it was time to retire. The timing couldn't have been better since their other son, Paul, just happened to be looking for a new venture.

A trained and certified chef, Paul fell into a teaching position in Poland 10 years ago. He married a lovely Polish lady, Agnieszka, who was a former European chess champion, and together they opened an English school. But last year, out of the blue, the couple decided it was time to move back to Canada. After a discussion with Doug and Marietta, it was decided that Paul and Agnieszka would take over their roles in the agency. Chris' wife Heidi had joined the business a couple of years earlier, continuing the family tradition.

Chris says Paul has been a real asset to the business because he not only understands how to use every cooking tool they sell, he also appreciates good quality. Selling came to him naturally and the industry has welcomed him wholeheartedly.

Two sons, age eight and nine, keep Chris and Heidi busy after hours but they also find the time to compete in triathalons. Working together and playing together keeps them active and healthy, he says, and better able to deal with the challenges of a business that is always changing.

"I realize that some stores are closing but I don't believe there is a shortage of retailers in our market," says Chris. "The business is not shrinking, it's evolving. We simply have to learn to evolve with it." 🐾



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