

HomeStyle

Canada's Housewares Magazine

July 2016

Stovetop SIZZLE

WHAT'S **HOT** IN COOKWARE

NEW TRENDS IN TABLEWARE

The latest grind
in pepper mills

We visit
Calgary's Zest
Kitchenware

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Stephan Lafreniere
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Super Sales Person

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Opening Lines

Trade show success depends on us

There's a popular saying here in southern Ontario: if you don't like the weather, wait a few minutes and it will change. The same is true of trade shows when you encounter exhibitors who like to constantly complain. Wait a few minutes, move to the next booth and chances are you'll meet someone who is having a great show and is filled with enthusiasm.

Sadly, in the case of the much-maligned Toronto Gift Fair, that whole 'squeaky wheel thing' comes into play. The complainers can always be heard loud and clear. The happy, satisfied customers, not so much. It's a shame, because we really need the Toronto Gift Fair, and many of the retailers who buy housewares have come to depend on it. I believe the organizers, who have been straddled with unwieldy space contracts beyond their control, are doing their best to keep everyone happy while honoring previously-made commitments. Having run a trade show in the past, I know what kind of a juggling act that represents.

Housewares is a comparatively tiny section of the show, but we *are* the squeaky wheel and some are not completely happy with the way things are progressing. As the small but powerful engine that helps drive this show by bringing in the big brands, CanGift is paying special attention to housewares and working hard to make changes. But they can't change the length, or the location, or timing of the show – at least not for a couple of years. Housewares exhibitors are simply going to have to accept that fact, and make the best of it.

We, as an industry, need to work together to keep the Toronto Gift Fair vital. It's the only Canadian show we have left and, despite the pessimism that permeates the aisles of the Congress Centre, I have always found encouraging pockets of positivity. Focus on what is good about the show, and on the retailers who still need it to get a first look at each supplier's new assortment. If you're going to take the time to exhibit, be the best you can be. There are still plenty of opportunities out there, opportunities that might be missed without this show. Not all stores are going out of business, and many of those retailers still around are doing very well.

And what about exploring new merchandising opportunities? Exhibitors might open up new accounts with gift stores, or grocery stores, or new online retailers. Independent retailers get a chance to scour all the corners of both the International Centre and Congress Centre to find something different and exciting to complement their kitchenware lines. It is expensive to exhibit, and it costs a lot for out-of-province retailers to travel to Toronto. If no effort is made to bring some level of excitement to the booth, that money is wasted.

A show is only as good as the people who exhibit, but it does help to have a few events on site and that's where CanGift is trying to make a difference. This August, Zwilling will be sponsoring a new Chef's Kitchen feature area with a line-up of professional chefs demonstrating the latest recipes.

And *Home Style* is thrilled to sponsor a brand new "Product Showcase" area featuring only the hottest new products from a range of housewares exhibitors. Be sure to stop by this special showcase in Hall 7 of the Congress Centre South for a quick overview of what's new before you begin your show shopping.

I know some exhibitors have committed to the August gift fair with reservations. They have adopted a 'wait and see' attitude to gauge what changes show organizers will make. Trouble is, as far as retailers are concerned, the exhibitors *are* the show. CanGift can provide the environment but exhibitors have to give retailers a reason to attend. Change has to come from within and as long as negativity permeates the show floor, we'll never see positive progress.



– Laurie O'Halloran
laurie@homestylemag.ca

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People In The News

• **Nathalie St.-Laurent** is the new regional manager for Eastern Canada for Groupe SEB. She will be responsible for gourmet retailers in the area following the retirement of Christiane Courtois.

• **Sylvio LaMattina** has been promoted to director of sales for Danesco. Sylvio was



formerly sales manager of the company's Retail Division. Since then, Sylvio's contribution to growing sales and customer service has been significant.

• After closing down his award-winning Stark & Whyte store in January, **Philip Stark** is opening a brand new retail location on trendy Saint-Laurent

Boulevard in downtown Montreal. The new kitchen shop, which officially launched in May, is called ZEF Home & Cafe. Zef is a South African slang word for 'anti-culture' and refers to having a hip, cool attitude. (Watch for more details in an upcoming issue.)

• **Dirk Van De Berghe**, CEO of Walmart Canada, will take over Walmart China in August. He will also will serve as regional president for Walmart's Asia business, including Walmart Japan. **Scott Price**, currently Walmart Asia president and CEO, will now focus exclusively on his role as chief administrative officer for Walmart International. A new leader for Walmart Canada has not been announced.

• **Fox Run Brands** has acquired Tops Manufacturing Company, a manufacturer of coffee and tea accessories.

Letters

I really enjoy reading your opening lines editorial in each issue. I am always agreeing with the column, saying "exactly, that is so true", or "yes, that is a good idea"! I thought I should let you know.

Arden, Market Kitchen Store, Vancouver

Thank you so very much for the lovely article on our store and the extra copies of the magazine that you dropped off at the store. I have had several emails from people that loved your report about the business. Thank you for supporting my efforts as a retailer.

Sigrid Wolm, Kitchen to Table, Orangeville

We want to sincerely thank you and your team for the coverage Breville received in *Home Style's* May Issue. It was great to see a full page dedicated to the launch of the company's new Quick Touch Crisp oven.

Chelsea Cowan, Birchall & Associates

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Remembering Jolanta Sudnik

Jolanta Sudnik, owner of Jolanta Interiors and a retail pioneer who also ran a successful import company, died peacefully at home on May 1st. Born in 1948, Jolanta had battled cancer for several years. Her business ventures continued during that time thanks to the tremendous support of her family and friends, especially her devoted daughter, Jogi.

Jolanta will be dearly missed by



everyone, including her partner of nearly 20 years, Jan Szarycz, with whom she shared her zest for life, laughter and happiness, as well as a passion for gardening and mushroom-picking.

Jolanta always started each day with a smile and positive attitude!

An entrepreneur at heart, Jolanta opened Jolanta Interiors in 1975, after graduating from Interior Design at Ryerson University. Early in her life, she developed an enthusiastic work ethic and love for business while working at her parents' delicatessen and bakery in the heart of Bloor West Village. Her store continues to be a longstanding neighborhood treasure.

An account has been set up at TD Canada Trust: ACCT # 1144-635 9391 – in trust for Jolanta Sudnik. All contributions will go directly to the Oncology Clinic, and to all those who provided such outstanding care for Jolanta.



Jolanta Sudnik, left, and her daughter, Jogi, at an industry party in 2015, above.



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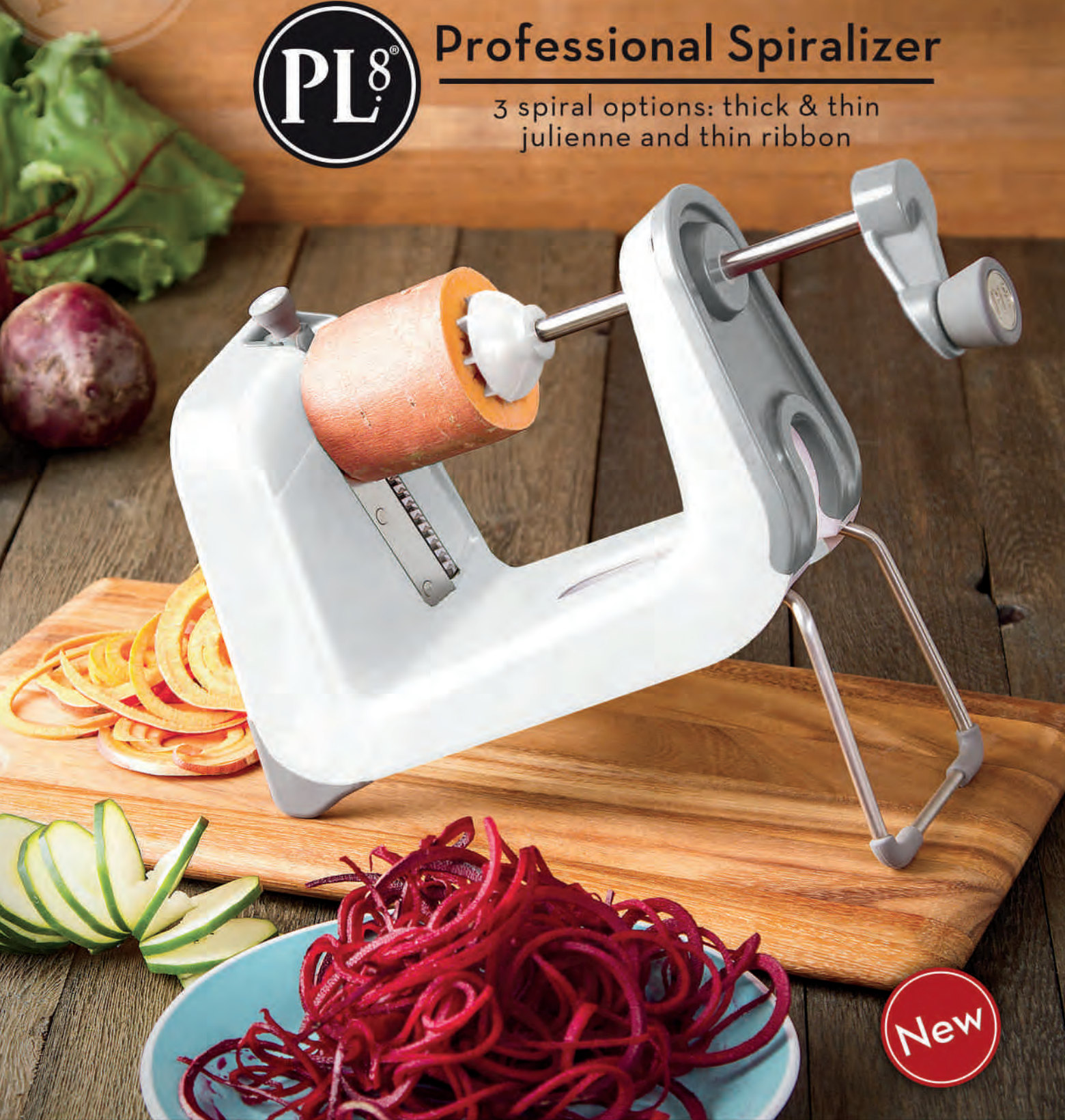
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Study looks at biggest retail turnoffs

A recent Harris Poll surveyed U.S. customers to find out what their biggest retail turnoffs are. It seems the basics – such as a clean, well-maintained store – make a huge difference in whether customers will return to a particular store.

Overall, “general bad odor” is the biggest retail turnoff, cited by 78% of those surveyed. Close behind on the list of retail turnoffs:

- Dirty restrooms – 66%;
- Dirty surfaces (dust on displays or dirt on floors) – 65%;
- Entryway cleanliness – 60%.

Baby boomers age 65 and up are least likely of any age group to return to a store with physical facility problems.

This study is good news for small retailers, because the problems that drive customers away are easily solved or avoided. Here are some suggestions to help you avoid having retail turnoffs:

1. Keep it clean. Use a janitorial service and/or assign employees to keep the store clean. Employees can do basic cleaning, such as dusting displays, during slow times while the store is open.

2. Make it functional. Plumbing problems affecting toilets or sinks are among the functionality issues that drive customers away.

3. Light it up. Lighting matters more than you might think. If your store isn't properly lit, your products won't be shown to their best advantage. More than that, however, dim lighting can be a safety hazard for senior customers.

4. Don't forget the façade. Even if everything inside your store is spic and span, the outside of the building can still turn customers off. Trash in the parking lot or near the store entrance, overflowing trashcans and a run-down look won't exactly have customers crowding into your store.

5. Keep it quiet. More than 40% customers say too-loud music, ringing phones or loud employees are a turnoff. Of course, this may vary depending on your target customers, but in general, maintaining appropriate noise levels will ensure everyone stays happy.

6. Take your temperature. A store that's too cold or too hot will turn off 30% of shoppers; more men than women find temperature issues a deal-breaker. Maintain your store at a temperature that's comfortable while still keeping your utility costs within reason. For example, turning your air-conditioning on early in the day (instead of waiting until it's sweltering inside) can keep your store cool without forcing your air-conditioning unit to work too hard.

More buyers go online

U.S. consumers now make 51% of their purchases online, the first time shoppers have bought more online than in stores, according to an annual survey from ComScore and United Parcel Service. Millennials lead the way with 54% of their purchases happening online, but online shopping among other age groups rose to 49% from 44% two years ago, the survey reports.

Meeting the culinary needs of Millennials

Packaged Facts recently released its *Millennial Menu: Culinary Trend Tracking Series* report. The study found that as culinary consumers, Millennials are looking for bold and different items, as well as those that fit their lives and schedules.

Here are the top five food trends Millennials are inspiring:

• **Customization:** The Millennial definition of customized, personalized, made-to-order food goes way beyond “white, wheat, or rye” to encompass restaurant meals that are bespoke in their entirety. More than a third of Millennials order something different every time they visit a restaurant.

• **Mashups:** Taking up where fusion left off is the mashup trend. This trend includes an opportunity for consumers to get involved in the creation of the newest crazy-mixed-up food or beverage. Many Millennials are thrill-seeking foodies.

• **Munchies:** Ditching the three-meals-a-day standard, Millennials are reshaping eating patterns, often opting for several snacks or small meals throughout the day. With 35% of Millennials trending toward snacks as meal replacements, munchies are now expected to be healthful, flavorful and portable.

• **Bowls:** Bowls are fast becoming the preferred vessel for everything from rice, noodles and salad to quinoa, acai, and poké. Whether the ingredients are customized or pre-set, bowls allow for creative expression and plenty of room for healthy ingredients, all within a familiar format.

• **Shrubs and Digestives:** As consumers become more interested in probiotics, shrubs and digestives have taken on new life in the market as beverages, mixers and flavoring agents. Millennials are decreasing consumption of traditional sugary drinks and looking for drinking vinegars, artisanal tonics, and kombuch.

Even online shoppers crave consistency

As mobile usage becomes ubiquitous, the path to purchase is less defined. Shoppers are always connected, well-informed and often quick to convert both digitally and in-store. The traditional shopping phases still exist, but once smartphones are introduced, behavior shifts, as explored in a new eMarketer report, *The Changing Path to Purchase: What It Means to Add Mobile to the Mix*.

Broadly speaking, shoppers crave consistency. When internet users were polled by Magnetic and Retail TouchPoints in April 2015, 59% of respondents cited consistency between digital channels and in-store as the most important part of a retail experience, while consistency across devices was vital to 54%. When retailers in the study were asked about information provided to customers along the shopping journey, only 36% claimed to be offering a seamless experience across mobile and desktop.



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More young people drink gourmet coffee

In the last eight years, past-day consumption of coffee beverages labeled “gourmet” soared from just 13% to 36% among consumers 18 to 24. For older Millennials – those aged 25 to 39 – gourmet coffee beverage consumption increased from 19% in 2008 to 41% this year. This group is also most likely to drink gourmet coffee beverages weekly.

Espresso-based beverage consumption tends to skew younger, with 44% of 18 to 24-year-olds and 50% of 25 to 39-year-olds drinking espresso-based beverages within the last week. This compares to just 26% of 40 to 59-year-olds and 19% of consumers 60 and above. For retailers, that means offering brewers and coffee options that fit this growing demand for gourmet beverages.

Millennials and younger consumers aren't just driving a trend to gourmet coffee beverages. Coffee consumption in general is up for younger generations. Daily coffee consumption among 18 to 24-year-olds has doubled since 2000, from 25% to nearly 50%. For those 25 to 39, daily coffee consumption increased from 42% in 2000 to 60% in 2016.

The study found that consumers in general are more apt to explore new coffee types. Throughout the last year, 8% of survey respondents said they tried flat white while 10% tried nitrogen carbonated coffee and 15% claim to have tried cold brew coffee. Many businesses have recognized this trend and have responded with bottled or cold brew keg offerings in locations.

Single-cup brewing is still a growing coffee preparation method both at home and at work. In 2016, 33% of those who have a workplace coffee area have a single-cup machine, according to NCA data. This compares to just 30% in 2014-2015.

While single-cup brewing methods are increasing, drip coffee makers are in decline. In the workplace, drip coffee maker placement dropped from 59% in 2015 to 55 percent in 2016.

The bad news for retailers is that coffee preparation out-of-home is up in

2016, with 34% of consumers drinking the beverage away-from-home compared to 30% in 2015. Out-of-home coffee consumption is driven by younger consumers with half of those aged 18 to 39 drinking coffee daily out-of-home.

Canadians slow to order groceries online

Canadians are laggards when it comes to buying groceries online but that's about to change quickly, according to speakers at the Retail Council of Canada conference last June.

“We think you should think of this as the competitor that is coming in and is going to take 10% of your market,” says Randy Burt of A.K. Kearny Consumer and Retail Practice.

In Britain, 15% of grocery sales are conducted online, in France the figure is 9%. Five per cent of the \$1-trillion grocery market in the U.S. is online, but in Canada, online shopping for groceries comprises less than 2% of \$120-billion in annual grocery sales, according to Vishwa Chandra of Instacart.

Chandra estimates that the market for online groceries in Canada is somewhere above 15%.

Canada has been behind the curve because consumers weren't ready for it and retailers didn't have the infrastructure in place to offer it. Grocery delivery was seen by most grocers as a luxury, adding cost to operations and subtracting from profits in an industry where margins are slim to begin with, says Chandra. But that is changing.

Loblaws and Walmart offer online grocery shopping with store pick-up at some locations, and Longo's Grocery Gateway has provided online ordering with home delivery for some time.

And hot on the heels of millennials is Generation Z, those born after 1996, who are digital natives, having grown up using tablets, smartphones and computers. They are entirely comfortable with technology and don't need to master new skills to use it. Generation Z expects that everything they need, including groceries, will be available online.

Thailand tries to curb obesity problem

Some of the best food on Earth is pretty greasy, so one consumer agency in Thailand has come up with a simple way to lighten things up.

BBDO Bangkok partnered with the Thai Health Promotion Foundation to address Thailand's obesity problem, largely linked to the amount of oil used in the country's popular cuisine. (Thailand is ranked second in Southeast Asia for its high obesity rates.) But instead of trying to change how the food is cooked, the client and agency chose instead to focus on how the food is served.

The result is the AbsorbPlate, which features 500 perforations that catch and hold some of the grease from your meal. They claim this new product will capture seven mL of oil, which is about one and a half teaspoons. That's not much, but it does shave about 30 calories off the total.

BBDO Bangkok reports the plate has already been launched as a trial, and thousands of plates have been distributed to local restaurants.

SodaStream turns to home-craft beer

SodaStream is tapping into a new beverage segment with the launch of its Beer Bar. The new appliance line allows consumers to make home-crafted beer using sparkling water with a “unique beer concentrate.”

The Beer Bar is being launched with a light beer, Blondie, which has a smooth authentic taste, and a hop filled aroma. The Beer Bar lets consumers concoct crafted beer in seconds by adding Blondie concentrate to sparkling water. Blondie contains 4.5% alcohol by volume, the average level found in most global beer brands. A one liter Blondie bottle yields approximately three liters of beer.

SodaStream launch the Beer Bar in Europe's beer capitals first. The appliance was available in SodaStream Germany's online store. Other markets are expected to launch in late 2016 and 2017.



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Millennial dads are doing the shopping

More fathers are buying groceries, according to a new study of consumer shopping from mobile shopping app Ibotta, with Millennials being more active shoppers compared with older generations.

The study analyzed the shopping behavior of more than 90,000 dads since 2013. It revealed that Millennial dads are spending the most time in the grocery aisles overall, increasing their number of grocery purchases by 62% since 2013. The younger fathers in this age group (ages 18-24) are purchasing 25% more groceries than dads in older generations.

Men are making more trips to the grocery store each month – up nearly 5% since 2013, Ibotta found. Their overall shopping in general was up more than 10% in the last three years. While the number of grocery trips has slightly increased since 2013 among moms, the share of groceries purchased by Millennial moms decreased by 2.4% during the same time span.

“The data suggests that Millennial dads are playing an increasingly bigger role at home, taking on more domestic responsibilities such as household shopping,” says Bijal Shah, VP of Ibotta. “This marks a generational shift from older fathers, and is bolstered by mobile-enabled commerce and younger dads’ savviness with smartphones and shopping apps.”

Canadians more open to ethnic foods

A Mintel survey of 2,000 Canadians found that 57% of respondents are more open to trying ethnic foods now than they were a few years ago, and 72% turn to ethnic-inspired dishes to break the monotony at mealtime. In addition, 73% of Canadians said they like to experience other cultures through food.

The main drivers of ethnic food consumption are: exploring new flavours (63%), wanting to try a new recipe (41%), searching for an adventurous eat-

ing experience (36%), recommended by friends/family members (34%) and getting tired of their typical cuisine.

Ethnic-inspired foods such as Chinese (89%), Italian (84%) and Latin American/Mexican (82%) are the most commonly eaten by Canadians, however less prominent dishes are also being sought out. For example, while just 20% of Canadians have tried African-inspired food, 50% are interested in doing so. Also on the list of foods consumers want to try are: Southeast Asian (44%), Korean (38%), Caribbean (35%) and Eastern European/Russian (29%).

While ethnic food is gaining popularity, many consumers don't think they have the cooking chops to make ethnic dishes at home. More than one-third (36%) said making ethnic foods is intimidating, and two in five think it's difficult to find ingredients to make ethnic dishes. In addition, 61% of consumers generally try ethnic-inspired foods at restaurants before preparing them at home.

Beveragemakers see a healthy sales boost

In the annual 2016 Home Beverage Report, *HOMEWORLD BUSINESS* explores the home beverage appliance and related housewares marketplace, analyzing key product segments, retail and sales performance, future growth potential and changing consumer preferences. Housewares suppliers and retailers in the home beverage marketplace today are focused on meeting the continued lifestyle preference of consumers who want to make a variety of specialized drinks at home.

A trend that spans across all demographics, the desire for shoppers young and old to make espresso, cappuccino or a variety of unique tea flavors remains strong. This has provided electric and non-electric coffeemaker suppliers the opportunity to develop new appliances and housewares that give their retail customers a chance to refresh in-store assortments.

In addition to the changes in hot bev-

erage categories, the on-going desire for many consumers to live a healthier lifestyle continues to be a major influence on several beverage-related segments. Categories including citrus juicing, hydration and water filtration are seeing solid sales growth as consumers seek greater control over the beverages they consume on a daily basis.

“The younger generation of consumers are focused on beverages that are clean and natural, while the empty nesters are treating this as a health issue,” says Joe Derochowski, executive director, home industry analyst with The NPD Group. “These two groups are also focused on managing their money and tend to eat and drink at home a great deal.”

NY Times to sell recipe ingredients

This summer the *New York Times* started selling ingredients for recipes from its *NYT Cooking* website as the newspaper seeks new revenue sources to offset declines in print newspapers. The paper is partnering with Chef'd, a meal-delivery startup, which will send ingredients to readers within 48 hours.

The newspaper is exploring different ways to make money. Last year advertising accounted for 94% of total revenue, and that number is declining. *The Times* is also involved in live conferences, a wine club, an online store selling branded items and a growing travel business that arranges tours led by the newspaper's foreign correspondents.

Online shoppers don't like to wait

The number of online shoppers willing to wait more than five days for their orders fell to 60% from 74% four years ago, according to a poll from AlixPartners. More than half the 1,000 respondents said they browse online based on shipping options. Less than 50% have used same-day shipping, and many said free-shipping offers influence their buying decisions.

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Groupe SEB purchases WMF

Groupe SEB has acquired WMF, the German manufacturer of kitchen tools and cookware, from private equity firm KKR for \$1.14 billion. In addition, Groupe SEB also signed an agreement to acquire the Emsa kitchenware company.

According to Group SEB, the purchase of WMF will allow the company to acquire a solid leadership in the professional coffee machine market; strengthen its position in the cookware segment; accelerate its development in the key market of kitchen utensils and accessories; consolidate its brand portfolio with strong new brands; and access a network of 200 own-retail shops in Germany.

"The acquisition of WMF is a new structuring step in our development. It allows us to add very strong brands to our portfolio. Furthermore, it is a fantastic opportunity to become a leading player in the very attractive professional coffee machine market and to capitalize on WMF's cutting-edge technologies to enrich our small domestic equipment product offering," says Thierry de La Tour d'Artaise, Groupe SEB CEO.

WMF, founded in 1853, specializes in three product lines: professional coffee machines, small domestic equipment such as cookware and small domestic appliances; and equipment for the hotel industry. The purchase is expected to close in the second half of this year.

EdgeCraft bought by Legacy Companies

The Legacy Companies has acquired EdgeCraft Corporation, owners of the Chef'sChoice brand.

Founded in 1984, EdgeCraft Corporation introduced the first Chef'sChoice electric knife sharpener in 1985. Today, Chef'sChoice is available in more than 80 countries worldwide, with more than 100 models of electric and manual knife sharpeners, as well as electric food grinders, slicers, wafflemakers, grills and hot beverage appliances.

"We are pleased to announce the

completion of this acquisition," says Neal Asbury, CEO of The Legacy Companies. "It represents our continued commitment to expanding our manufacturing operations and building our portfolio of Legacy brands."

Asbury adds Chef'sChoice would remain headquartered in Avondale, Pennsylvania, and maintain all operations.

"We have spent significant time with The Legacy Companies' management team and are convinced the culture and ambition is similar to what we've built at EdgeCraft," says Sam Weiner, EdgeCraft's president. "It's exciting for EdgeCraft to be an official part of The Legacy Companies where we can leverage the resources and brand expertise of each company to further innovate and develop our products to accelerate growth worldwide."

Philips teams up with Gordon Ramsay

Renowned chef Gordon Ramsay is teaming up with Philips in an effort to educate consumers on how to use the company's airfryer to make healthy meals. Through the partnership, Ramsay will share his favorite recipes using the Philips Airfryer through instructional videos that will be available on

www.philips.com/airfryer.

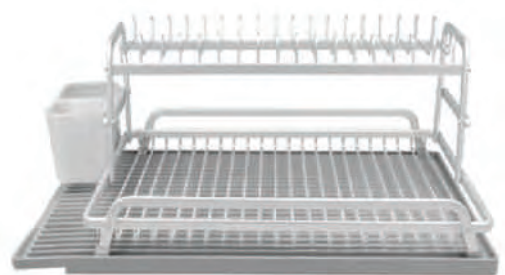
"Living a healthy lifestyle is so important to my family," says Ramsay. "I love the fact that Philips' Airfryer can deliver dishes with great taste and texture, in a short amount of time."

Breville partners with Nespresso

Nespresso is expanding its United States and Canadian distribution model through a partnership with appliance manufacturer Breville.

According to Nespresso, by January 2017 all Nespresso machines sold to retail partners will be distributed by Breville, DeLonghi or KitchenAid, offering Nespresso Club Members, prospective consumers and retail partners a large assortment of appliances and color options. Nespresso will continue to offer products in their boutiques, through the Nespresso Club and online.

This expanded Nespresso distribution model in the U.S. and Canada appoints strategic machine partners, Breville, DeLonghi and KitchenAid, to handle distribution of the Nespresso machine range to retailers as well as to co-brand all Nespresso machines. This Breville partnership complements its longstanding partnership with DeLonghi.



Jascor launches new kitchen and bath range

Jascor Housewares recently launched *tada*, a new kitchen and bathroom accessories line. Most of the bathroom items are equipped with a unique, patented vacuum suction system that will ensure a tight, fixed seal. Shower caddies, soap trays and towel bars are just a few items in the line that use this technology.

In the kitchen, the company has made good use of high-quality materials like 100% food grade silicone in items such as Sink Protectors. Other products, such as the Over-Sink Drying Mat, are custom-engineered to address common kitchen problems, like space constraints.



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Vendors News



New barware collection caters to wine lovers

Trudeau recently revamped its wine and bar collection with over 20 products designed to inspire at-home mixologists and wine lovers. The company worked with sommeliers and wine industry specialists to better understand consumer needs and market trends. Packaging and merchandising systems, such as the one shown above, have a brand new look and design. From sketches to prototypes to reality, each product was developed by Trudeau's in-house team of talented product developers and industrial designers and comes with Trudeau's Lifetime Warranty.

Consumers give Keurig the Kold shoulder

Keurig has put its Kold system on ice. The company said it was discontinuing its high-profile cold home beverage maker, and cutting 100 jobs. Introduced in September of 2015, Kold offered flavours such as Coca-Cola, Sprite and Dr. Pepper. However, many retail analysts questioned the pricing structure of the units (which sold for \$369) and the flavour pods, a four-pack of which sold for between \$4.49 and \$4.99. Each pod would produce eight ounces of soda.

DeLonghi relaunched Braun small appliances

DeLonghi Group is relaunching the Braun brand in kitchen electrics with a new assortment that includes a hand blender, countertop blender and coffeemaker.

According to Mike Prager, North American president and CEO. "After listening to a range of consumers, we created the new line of Braun specifically for their needs today. The last time Braun appliances were on the market was in 2008."

The new line includes the Multiquick hand blender in several configurations, the PureMix countertop blender and BrewSense drip coffeemaker.

Braun's North American consumer marketing efforts beginning in June will include branded video content, print and digital advertising, as well as in-store merchandising and experiential activations. The campaign will show how Braun kitchen appliances can be used in meal preparation at home.

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New retail complex serves home DIYers

An innovative new retail concept opened on June 25th in Vaughan, Ontario, just north of Toronto. Called *Improve*, the massive 320,000-square-foot centre features about 400 construction, furnishing and design related businesses under one roof. The complex also includes meeting rooms, cafés, a 200-seat auditorium for product launches and 1,500 parking stalls.

The centre features 38 categories of home improvement products, including cabinetry, lighting, appliances and fireplaces. Hundreds of companies have purchased space at the innovative mall. Improve describes its concept as "a win-win for retailers and consumers, making shopping easy for potential customers and providing maximum exposure for home improvement-based businesses".

Ikea cashes in on cocooning Canadians

You'd think home improvement projects would sit on consumers' back burners when the economy is weak, but the industry has been thriving thanks to cocooning Canadians, and Ikea has been one of the trend's biggest beneficiaries.

"Canadians are not travelling like they have done in the past," says Stefan Sjöstrand, president of Ikea Canada.

"When the dollar is weak, they stay home, and when they stay home they invest in their homes and spend more on home furnishings."

Ikea Canada, which has annual sales of \$1.8 billion, jumped 15% between September and April compared with the same period a year earlier. That's more

than double the rate of overall growth of 6.8% in the retail home furnishings sector during that period, and comes after a fiscal year in which sales grew 10.4% as the retailer continues to pick up steam.

In the 12-month period ending in March, Ikea increased its market share of Canada's \$22 billion home furnishings market to 8.5%, from 7.7% a year earlier, according to data from Statistics Canada.

The retailer, which opened its first Canadian outlet 40 years ago, has 12 large warehouse stores and last year opened five smaller "pick-up and order" locations, and a sixth one opened recently in Kitchener, Ontario. Last year, Ikea announced plans to double its store count in 10 years.

Web sales, which now amount to \$103 million a year, are likely to get an even bigger boost when the company debuts its first "click and collect" area at its Winnipeg store this fall.

GC debuts new summer catalogue

GC Buying Group is debuting a redesigned 2016 Spring/Summer catalogue and flyer. The 20-page catalog showcases an assortment of new merchandise from more than 50 vendors and includes tips and recipes.

"Our intention is to enthrall the end reader with new recipes, latest techniques and alternative functions of classic appliances and gadgets, resulting in a trip to the local kitchenwares store," says Janis Johnson, CEO.

Both print and digital versions of the catalogue are available so it can be distributed by mail, used as an in-store handout or disseminated online.

The rapid rise of online retail comes with new fraud and theft threats, as merchants shore up anti-theft measures in their brick-and-mortar stores. Retail losses to fraud as a portion of online retail sales has grown to 1.47% in 2015 from 0.68% in 2014, according to LexisNexis Risk Solutions.

Merger creates home improvement giant

Last June, Lowe's Companies completed the acquisition of Canadian home improvement retailer Rona, in a transaction valued at \$2.4 billion. A key step in accelerating Lowe's growth strategy, the acquisition creates one of the largest home improvement retailers in Canada, with 539 store locations.

Lowe's operates about 40 home centers in Canada. Rona operates a network of close to 500 corporate and independent affiliate dealer stores in a number of formats. Rona also operates nine distribution centers and owns the licensing rights and is the exclusive distributor of Ace in Canada.

"We are very pleased to welcome Rona and its talented team into the Lowe's family," Richard Maltsbarger, Lowe's president of international, told the *Globe & Mail*.

"This transaction significantly expands our presence in the Canadian market and provides attractive opportunities to drive revenue and profit growth while delivering meaningful long-term benefits to shareholders, customers, suppliers, employees and the communities we serve. We look forward to capitalizing on the significant potential created by bringing together our two great companies."

The Canadian operations are led by Sylvain Prud'homme, president and CEO of Lowe's Canada. "We are delighted to join forces with Rona's experienced team to take our businesses to the next level," he says. "With the closing now behind us, we have hit the ground running and are focused on assuring a smooth transition."

As part of its acquisition of Rona, Lowe's remains committed to headquartering the Canadian businesses in Boucherville, Quebec; maintaining Rona's multiple retail store banners; enhancing distribution services; maintaining key executives from its leadership team; continuing its local and ethical procurement strategy; and continuing to support Rona and Lowe's charitable and environmental initiatives.



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Ambiente opens its doors to the world

Ambiente, the global consumer-goods platform, will welcome buyers from all over the world from February 10th to 14th. That's when the Frankfurt Fair and Exhibition Centre will be transformed into a trend barometer, order venue and design platform revolving around tableware, kitchenware, household goods, wining and dining.

The Partner Country of the world's leading consumer-goods fair in 2017 is the United Kingdom. After flying the Italian tricolour flag this year, the next Ambiente will be dominated by the Union Jack.

"I am delighted that the United Kingdom, one of the world's most important political and business players and a partner of major significance for Germany, has agreed to be our Partner Country. But that's not all: the United Kingdom is a country of great diversity,

which results in an incomparable spectrum of outstanding design. And this is exactly what we aim to show visitors and exhibitors", says Detlef Braun of Messe Frankfurt GmbH.

The products of UK exhibitors will be shown in an extensive Partner Country presentation curated and designed by Scottish designer Janice Kirkpatrick, one of the UK's leading graphic and product designers. In 1986, she joined forces with architect Ross Hunter to found Graven, a design studio that handles some of the world's biggest brands.

Vegas market expands

The Las Vegas Market continues to expand its gift-oriented housewares, tabletop and specialty food resources for the summer market. The expansion on C11, a floor in the World Market Center complex devoted to gifting housewares, tabletop and specialty food, will encom-

pass nine new showrooms and 25 new product lines.

Showrooms debuting on C11 include gourmet and gift supplier Brand Castle, tabletop and housewares provider Circa Asia, and tabletop and housewares resource Janey Lynn's Designs. In addition, several companies, including Le Creuset, plan to operate micro showrooms on C11.

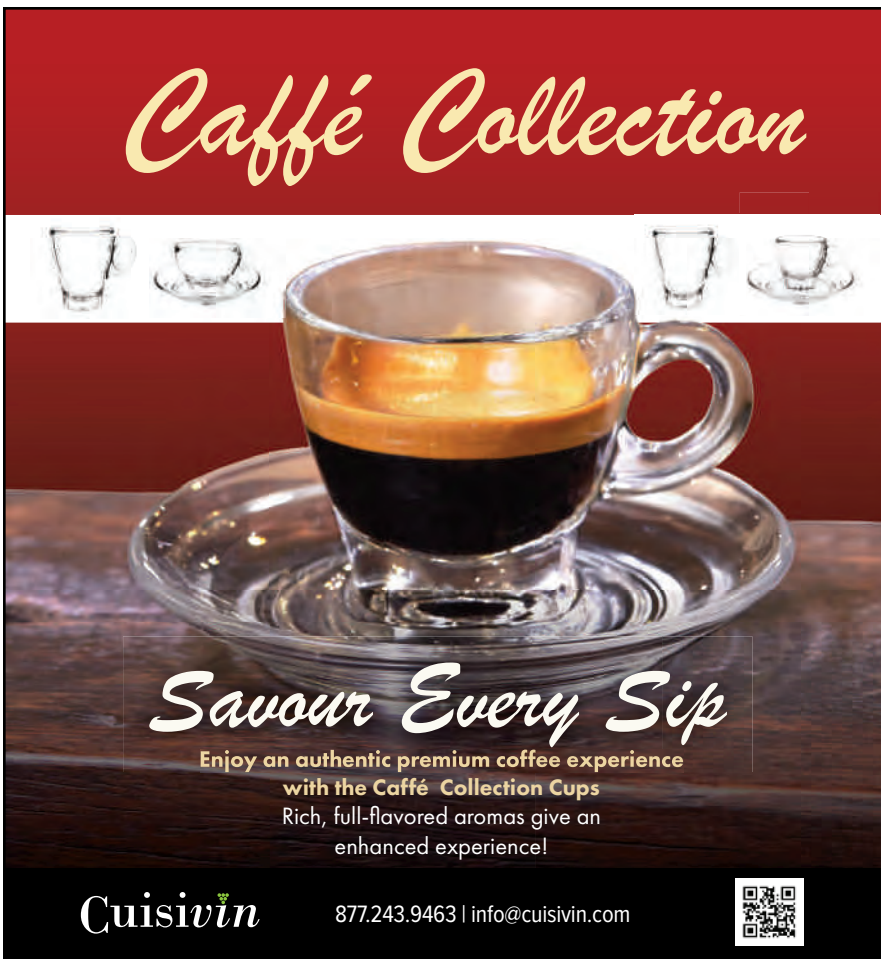
"Las Vegas Market has been steadily expanding the gourmet housewares presentation on C11 since its debut in summer 2015, and industry-leading suppliers and brands are continuing to flock to this vibrant venue," says Dorothy Belshaw, IMC president of gift and home décor. "Las Vegas Market is committed to presenting an exciting, cross-category assortment of housewares, tabletop and specialty food resources that will appeal to our existing gift and home décor buyers, as well as offer new buying opportunities for gourmet retailers."

The summer Las Vegas Market runs from July 31st to August 4th.

Tendence adds new Point-of-Sale display

New impetus and shopping impulses will be generated by a new 'Village' presentation at the Tendence consumer-goods fair in Frankfurt. From August 27th to 30th, ten leading companies will demonstrate how products can be arranged effectively at the point-of-sale. The presentation is located in Hall 11.1 and will promote an exchange of information and networking between buyers and exhibitors.

The 'Village' format is the result of an exhibitor initiative and has been developed together with Messe Frankfurt. Tendence, the international consumer-goods event, is Germany's largest order fair for consumer goods in the second half of the year with an extensive range of products from the home, furnishing, decorating, gifts, jewellery and fashion accessory segments. Key players present their Christmas trends, giving the retail trade an opportunity to place follow-up orders for the season.




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A brand new vision for kitchen

Home Style sat down with Stephan Lafreniere to talk about how he and his team have turned housewares into a key growth category for Canadian Tire as the iconic 94-year-old retailer undergoes a huge digital revolution

By Laurie O'Halloran



Since Stephan Lafreniere joined the company in 2012, Canadian Tire has been on a roll – and it has nothing to do with the automotive business. With passion, drive and a commitment to excellence, Stephan and his team have made significant strides with the housewares and tabletop categories at this Canadian retail institution.

As associate vice president of kitchen and personal care, the efforts of Stephan and his talented team have won over consumers and earned accolades from the Retail Council of Canada. On June 1st, they won the Council's Private Label General Merchandise award for their popular Wild Rose CANVAS dinnerware set, proving that they are definitely on the right merchandising track.

CANVAS is the name of the new private label line for Canadian Tire and it's development has been a passion of Stephan's. Under his watch, the category has taken on a much more fashion-forward appeal, a result of his extensive

experience in – and understanding of – the home decor market.

Born in North Bay, Stephan spent most of his youth in northern Ontario, where his father worked at Sears. After graduating from college in 1995, Stephan accepted a management trainee position with Sears in Owen Sound, Ontario. He hadn't intended on a career in retail but soon found it very rewarding.

He began in hardlines, and then moved to a Sudbury store within a year to become manager of large appliances, an integral category for Sears. In 1997, he was transferred to Toronto and has never looked back.

"My passion has always been for the merchandising side of retail because it allows for more creativity," says Stephan. "I enjoy the entrepreneurial aspect of the job, from finding the product to merchandising it effectively."

He left Sears for a brief stint at Loblaws before joining Home Outfitters in 2008. Stephan spent four years in housewares planning and merchandising and though it was a valuable learning experience, as the company evolved he found it was no longer a good fit.

Shortly after leaving to pursue other opportunities, he met T.J. Flood, the innovative marketing maverick who was vice president of Canadian Tire at the time. They connected instantly and T.J. became a mentor when Stephan decided

Stephan Lafreniere, left, says Canadian Tire's success in kitchen and tabletop is the direct result of having "the absolute best merchant team in the industry". That team currently includes senior category business managers Dan Turpin and Jon Cooperman and category business managers Esther Ifrah and Wissam El-Hajj-Khalil.

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Executive Retail Profile: **Stephan Lafreniere**

to join Canadian Tire as associate V.P. of kitchen. It's a category he loves and has embraced as his area of expertise.

Stephan says he was initially attracted to CT because it was an iconic Canadian institution that was in the process of reinventing itself. They had been a key competitor for him at Outfitters and he knew it was an intelligent and formidable Canadian retail force.

"Canadian Tire had weathered the storm from big competitors such as Home Depot, Walmart and Target," he explains. "And it seemed every time a new U.S. retailer arrived, Canadian Tire got stronger. They had made a big investment in the 'living division', which gave them a stronger connection to the female head of the household."

Coming from a smaller retail company, Stephan realized that joining this 500-store associate dealer network was not just a great career move but "an ideal opportunity to evolve the business from mass merchant to a more specialized retail approach".

Of course, he was also intrigued by the talent of T.J., who has since been promoted to senior vice president of strategic marketing. "T.J. is a smart, dynamic guy who motivated me and had big ambitions for the department," says Stephan. "He is a great example of the type of people who work at Canadian Tire. They are really focused on results but how they work together to achieve those results also matters."

In his current role, 90% of Stephan's focus is on the kitchen (electrics, cook-

ware, tools/gadgets and tabletop) but he also oversees personal care. He has four category managers who work for him, each of whom has a business analyst reporting directly to them.

In recent years, the role of associate V.P. of merchandising has shifted from being a 'true merchant position' to more of a general manager. In addition to the buyers, Stephan has a very close connection to a large team of people from replenishment, forecasting and marketing, not to mention advertising and the all-important digital platform.

After some bumpy attempts at online sales, Canadian Tire returned to e-commerce with a vengeance recently, supported by the incredible new "WOW Guide", a digitally-upgraded version of the traditional seasonal catalogue that disappeared a decade ago. Delivered in paper form to 12 million households, the guide is supported by a revolutionary digital platform. By leveraging innovative "Hover and Discover" technology, consumers can use the retailer's mobile app to get clickable details of products or video links when they hover over the catalogues with their smartphone or tablet. Within weeks of its release, visits to Canadiantire.ca doubled and continue to grow.

The catalogue is the most visible aspect of a multi-faceted digital initiative that has transformed the 94-year-old seller of hardware and hockey sticks into a global retail innovator. The company now operates three digital innovation centres in Calgary, Winnipeg and



Kitchener, Ontario. The high performance data centres develop and test new apps and a cloud computing facility (which helped create CT's new point-of-sale system).

So far, about \$400 million has been spent on what Canadian Tire calls its "phygital" approach, a strategy that emphasizes both physical stores and digital channels.

In response to the success of the first printing, a second WOW Guide will be published in early November. And once again, kitchen merchandise will be a key component as part of the company's all-encompassing "living strategy".

"Today, when you walk into a Canadian Tire store, one side is devoted to automotive and the other side is kitchen," he says. "It's our connection to the female shopper and the family because the kitchen is the focal point of the home. We do a lot of research and it confirms the importance of kitchen to the home environment, from dining to entertaining for our target customer: the active family with children at home."

The rapid growth of Canadian Tire's housewares segment over the past decade has been remarkable, both in terms of revenue and market recognition. The company is usually neck in

Canadian Tire has made tremendous strides with new digital platforms such as the *WOW Guide*, above, but will not abandon the bricks and mortar format.



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CANVAS is a winner!

The CANVAS Wild Rose 16-piece porcelain dinnerware set was honoured with the Grand Prix award from the Retail Council of Canada. The artwork came from Senay Studios and was commissioned for Canadian Tire by the Private Brand team. The design was hand sketched by designer Senay Guler (below). The exclusive pattern scatters black and white blooms across sleek white porcelain. Senay Guler is a textile designer, artist and illustrator based in Toronto.



neck with Walmart Canada for market dominance and they watch each other very closely. But Stephan Lafreniere is adamant – he wants Canadian Tire to be known as “Canada’s kitchen store”.

To achieve that goal, and to inspire his team, it’s important to get out into the marketplace to see what’s new. The day before our interview, Stephan and his team were in New York “on an exploratory market shop” where they visited specialty kitchen shops such as Whisk. “We watch every retailer to see what brands are trending and help us decide how to move forward,” he says.

The team also attends the Chicago housewares show, smaller regional shows, and the Ambiente Fair in Frankfurt. Last February, they took time to visit several stores in Germany and England after Ambiente to try and spot the latest trends and stay one step ahead of the competition.

Not all gourmet retail trends and ideas are applicable, of course. Canadian Tire is not a 500-square-foot specialty store and things have to be done on a much larger scale. It’s one reason Stephan has moved into more exclusive lines and private label programs.

When Stephan arrived at Canadian Tire, he saw a big opportunity from a branding perspective in tableware. There were so many colours and styles on display, it was confusing to the customer. Unlike small appliances, where vendors have done an excellent job promoting their own brands to consumers, tableware required proprietary lines and patterns to stay competitive.

“We changed our dinnerware assortment pretty dramatically last year,” he explains. “We introduced CANVAS and have put a lot of effort into developing a private brand that’s driven by style and design. It’s geared to consumers who want to decorate their home.”

So far, the CANVAS program has produced outstanding results and Stephan wants to ensure they have enough differentiation in their private brands to stand out. He and his team are justifiably proud of what they have accomplished.

“We’ve made big productivity gains

on multiple fronts: sales per sku, per linear foot, per flyer page and per brand,” he says. “The work in tabletop is a good example of this where we have been able to grow sales and profit while reducing skus/brands/vendors and also modestly reducing linear foot usage.”

In small appliances, the national brand is still essential, though it’s not always as easy to achieve the same level of differentiation. He is always open to suggestions and new ideas, however, and because he works with a network of 500 entrepreneurial associate dealers, Stephan takes a three-pronged approach involving the dealer, vendor and buyer.

“Our market share has been built by being one of the best at putting together a compelling stable of national brands, marketing them appropriately, and trying to stay focused on quality,” he says.

It’s an approach that has earned praise from the vendor community.

According to Fabrice Hensgen at Philips: “Not only does Stephan have an amazing amount of product knowledge, he has a clear vision for his category and he’s planned all the different milestones to achieve it. He is dedicated to bringing his department to new heights while raising consumers’ satisfaction with Canadian Tire (both online and offline). He’s a very good coach for all the people on his team.”

As for his negotiating style, Fabrice says Stephan is a strategic thinker who is logical and has a sharp business acumen. “Stephan has a great sense of balance between taking risks on new product categories and optimization of existing lines. He is straight, open, fair and sincere – a true partner with whom we can review and optimize situations.

“He trusts his team and his team has full confidence in his support,” he adds. “Stephan is committed on all his deliverables and is a pleasure to work with. Aside from all business activities, I really appreciate his true, kind and caring human nature.”

His associates at head office have been similarly impressed with Stephan’s approach over the past four years. Canadian Tire housewares veteran,

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Executive Retail Profile: **Stephan Lafreniere**

Jonathan Cooperman, senior category business manager for cookware, bakeware and cutlery, admires the 'balanced viewpoint and unique perspective that Stephan has brought to the entire team.

"Stephan is passionate about retail and specifically about the housewares industry," says Jonathan. "He has a detailed knowledge of all of the kitchen categories and I enjoy the opportunity to leverage his knowledge and insight on our assortment decisions. At the same time, he provides a great level of autonomy to let the team manage their respective categories.

He adds "Stephan has fostered strong relationships with our vendor partners across the industry. He always tries to collaborate on developing ways to grow the overall market and find 'win-win' opportunities for each side."

Small appliance senior category business manager Dan Turpin likes the fact that Stephan always strives to be the

best and doesn't accept mediocrity.

"He sets stretch goals, gets the team to buy in, and then manages toward them," he explains. "The focus is on process and performance management. He strives for excellence and works as a leader to get the most out of everyone and help them reach their true potential. He has experience as both a merchant and as a leader, so he offers great insights and guidance when new situations arise. Often the situations that are new to me are not new to him, so he is a great sounding board."

By finding the perfect blend of national brands and private label programs, Stephan Lafreniere has made quite an impact, both at Canadian Tire and within the housewares industry over the past two decades. He is respected by his peers and recognized by his vendors for his foresight, his depth of knowledge, and his collaborative approach to the business.

His team have completely altered the tabletop landscape at Canadian Tire, setting it apart from other retailers in the country. Yet Stephan says despite all the advances, it's still the people that make the difference in this business. Working as a cohesive unit with passionate, committed people is what matters.

"Whether we're out in the market, planning as a team, or working one-on-one, it's the interaction with others as we work at building our future that is most enjoyable for me," he says.

There is one part of his job that he does not enjoy, however, and that's the daily commute. Now living in Newmarket with his wife and two stepdaughters, he spends up to four hours every day on the highway but family commitments prevent him from moving closer. With typical good humour, he sees it as merely a minor inconvenience in a career that allows him to lead a dedicated team and pursue his passion for retail. 🐦

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A fresh start

With Zest Kitchenware, former employee Yvette Welsh gets to put her own twist on a popular Calgary retail shop

by Denise Gaze • Photography by Christina Forsyth

From part-time employee to store owner, that is the transition Yvette Welsh made six years ago when she bought one of three Compleat Cook stores in Calgary.

Yvette had spent two years working for former Compleat Cook owner Tawni Pashulka before making an offer to buy the shop in 2010. Tawni accepted, and Yvette quickly renamed the shop Zest Kitchenware. At the age of 50 – when most people think about winding down – Yvette was ready to roll up her

sleeves and work harder than ever.

Born in Bratislava, Slovakia, Yvette and her family moved to Canada in 1969 after the Soviet invasion. After growing up in both London and Brantford, Ontario, Yvette made the move out west when she married her husband, Doug.

“First we moved to Edmonton and then Calgary,” says Yvette. “We’ve lived out west for almost 27 years now and during that time, my husband and I often talked about owning a store. It just took a little while to get there!”

Graduating with a degree in Economics, Yvette initially worked for the Ministry Of the Attorney General as a Registrar’s Clerk where she had to learn all the rules of practice.

“*Rules of Practice* involved procedures to follow for filing documentation for county and supreme court cases,” explains Yvette. “When filings were done for cases, I had to make sure they were done in accordance with the rules.”

Her long road to retail also included working at the Royal Bank until her son was born. Yvette and Doug then moved to Edmonton, where their daughter was born. She decided to put her career on hold to raise her family. When Yvette finally returned to the workplace, she took a job in customer service with the Alberta Wheat Pool where she handled customer service and distribution.

Once Yvette started working part-time at Compleat Cook she was one step closer to her dream of one day becoming an independent retailer.

“Because I was already working for an independent retailer, I understood how hard it is to start your own store,” says Yvette. “I wasn’t getting any younger, but I didn’t want to golf everyday. I wanted to keep challenging myself.”



Yvette Welsh, left, bought one of three Compleat Cook stores in 2010.



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Independent Profile: Zest Kitchenware

Buying a store was the perfect solution and Yvette tells *Home Style* that, six years later, she enjoys everything about retail. She loves the customers and is very hands on in all aspects of the day to day operations, including all the buying, pricing, unpacking and working the floor as well as setting up the displays. Husband Doug, who is a Chartered Accountant and Chartered Business Valuator, keeps track of the business side.

Zest Kitchenware is situated in an open air plaza that gets plenty of traffic which has helped Yvette increase sales since taking over. With 5,000 SKUS in her 1,600-square-foot shop, Yvette employs six part-time staff and credits industry vendors with helping her make sure she's on top of the latest trends.

"Fortunately, I have a very good relationship with our suppliers," says Yvette. "They have been very informa-

tive and supportive over the years."

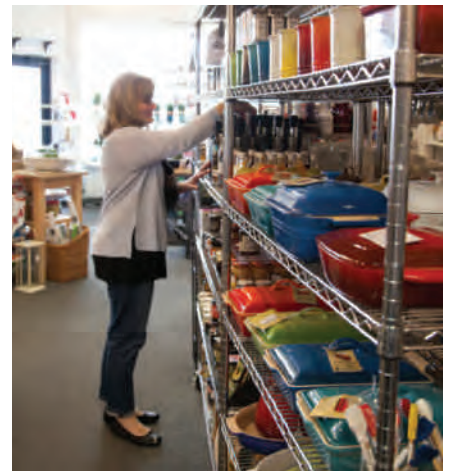
Ford Nixon of Nixon Agencies Alberta says "Yvette is very professional. She is always positive and well-prepared for our meetings."

Debra Decloux of Dove Tale Collections has been working with Yvette since 2010. She says "Yvette offers quality without compromise. You can find a Vietri footed dish for \$500 or a fun little kitchen gadget for \$10. It is rare that I leave her store without buying something myself and that is saying a lot because I am in several stores every day."

Yvette enjoys meeting with reps but also buys online and always attends the Toronto Gift Fair to see what's new.

"Gadgets really keep us going," says Yvette. "We also do very well with Le Creuset, tableware from Portmeirion and Zwilling. We tend to be quite regional in Calgary and I am seen as a destination shop so we must carry stock that keeps the customers coming back."

She adds "I have incredible staff who know the importance of following



Zest employs six people as well as Yvette's husband, Doug, who does the books.



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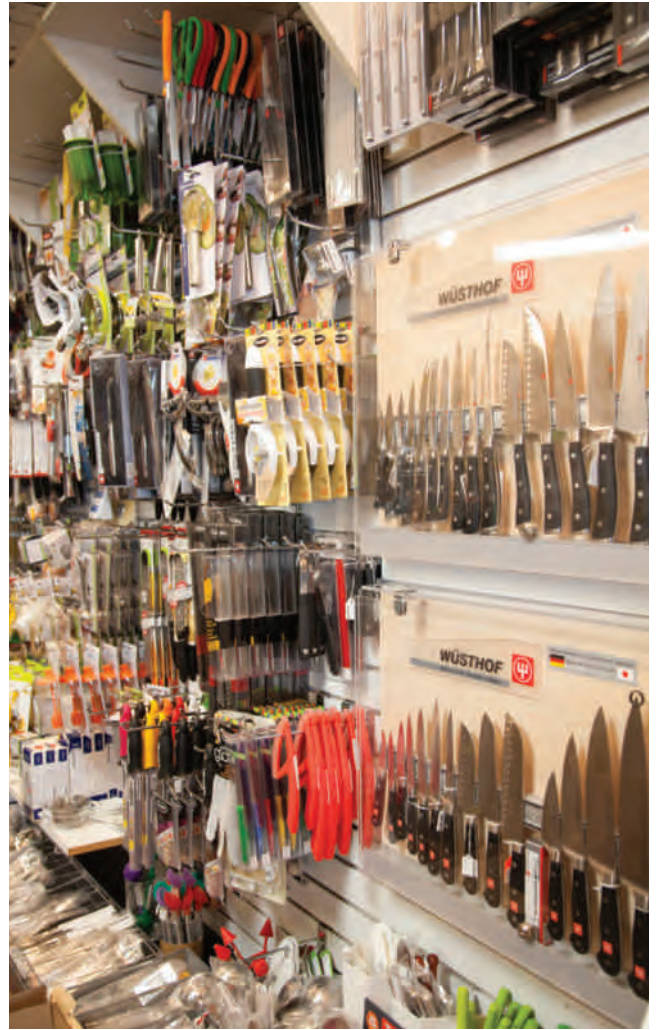
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Independent Profile: Zest Kitchenware



Best selling products include kitchen gadgets, gourmet foods and cutlery.

through to make sure customers find what they are looking for," she explains.

Yvette advertises in *City Palate*, a magazine that focuses on the food scene in Calgary. She also uses social media but has no intention of selling online.

"One of my biggest challenges is competing with online shopping and big box stores," says Yvette. "They carry some of the same items but we can't compete on price. Instead, we offer knowledgeable customer service and a greater variety of quality products."

Yvette feels very strongly that customer service is what gives Zest Kitchenware the competitive edge.

"Our retail philosophy is to provide a

positive shopping experience for our customers through service and great brands," says Yvette. "Not only do we carry unique products, all my staff love to cook and love the products they sell."

Oliver Janousek of Octagon Marketing finds Yvette is a pleasure to deal with. "She is proof that being strong in customer service and carrying quality products can still drive retail success."

Ralph Berry of Portmeirion/Royal Selangor adds "Yvette knows her market and customers well. From first impression to final purchase, she always makes shopping at Zest Kitchenware a satisfying experience."

Yvette's long range plan is to simply continue what she is doing and to keep the store growing. Having stood in the shoes of both an employee and now store owner, she is well-prepared to

meet each new challenge.

"I enjoy being an independent retailer and making my own decisions," says Yvette. "I know that providing good service and stocking great products has a huge impact on the success of our business, and I have always enjoyed working with people."

After hours, Yvette tries to find time for gardening and golf when she can. She also gives back by supporting charities such as the Children's Hospital Association and Hart-Humanitarian Aid Response which is dedicated to alleviating poverty and injustice in Eastern Europe, where Yvette was born.

Having chosen store floor over par four, Yvette Welsh couldn't be happier. Running Zest Kitchenware is her retirement plan and she's 'completely' satisfied with her decision. ☺

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K'OOK! for the kitchen

Searching for a new life, two retail entrepreneurs in the Netherlands found it with a kitchen shop that's been selected as one of the best in the world

By Michelle Hespe

In 2005, two friends with a passion for cooking – and a desire for a new life – joined forces and established a small 400-square-foot retail store in the Netherlands' Wormerveer. Fast forward 11 years, and K'OOK! is now 2,000 square feet, and was recently voted as one of the best retail stores in the world!

If you had known Anne van der Spoel and Karen Schoen when they were engrossed in their former careers – one in advertising and the other an assistant with the fire fighting department – you might not believe that the two would go on to have a store dedicated to cooking and now recognized as a global innova-

tor. In fact, the two women are still coming to terms with their achievement themselves.

"On the night of the *gia* awards in Chicago, when our name was read out as one of the five global honorees, we couldn't believe it," says Anne with a laugh. "We'd checked out all of the other 23 national winners in the competition, and we knew how great they were. We are still flabbergasted. We put news of our win on our Facebook page, and over 1000 people congratulated us on the first day. Then it really started to sink in."

The women found the process of en-

tering *gia* very beneficial, as it meant them putting every aspect of their business under the spotlight. "Entering the awards makes you look really closely at everything you do on a day-to-day basis, but also makes you stand back and look at the bigger picture. It was a great process for us to go through."

Ever the innovators, the business has become a dual one. The store is always incredibly busy and has a loyal following, but the pair also recognized the opportunity to create a food festival on the river that their store overlooks, and now it too is a successful business. Held in July and now in its third year, the festival attracts over 12,000 people and over 60 food trucks with delicious offerings, which serves to spread word of K'OOK! even further.

The women also run an Italian Food Weekend in their store, with Stefania Balducci of the Pasta al Pesto cooking studio visiting from Italy to run cooking workshops for the four days.

"This year we also had a sommelier from Umbria to organize wine tasting for two days," explains Anne. "The Italian weekend is combined with a pop-up restaurant with room for even more people to enjoy the Italian cuisine."

Everything in K'OOK! is designed by Karen and Anne. "From the cabinets to the kitchen and coffee bar, to the check-out and the decoration, it is all created by us, and this gives our store its own particular style," explains Karen. "We



The original store was only 400 square feet but the current location is 2000-square feet.

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Stock Pot

This 16-quart (15-litre) stainless steel stock pot is perfect for cooking corn on the cob or lobster.



Lobster Toolbox

With lobster crackers, forks, butter bowls and a pair of seafood scissors, this set for four people has everything you need for a sumptuous lobster dinner.



To find retail locations near you or to purchase online, visit ricardocuisine.com/store

went for an industrial feel, and the décor includes black steel in combination with white timber, white walls and a concrete floor.”

Spotlights are used to draw visitors’ full attention to the enormous array of cooking products in the store, with things such as hanging lamps over the kitchen bench, the checkout and a coffee table creating a pleasant, homey atmosphere. The pair, entrepreneurs at heart, also have their own product line in store, which includes picture postcards, bags, olive oil and coffee.

The large modern kitchen in K’OOK! is a recent addition, and this special space is the new heart of the store – used for demonstrating products and for guests to sample dishes and products. Workshops for up to ten people can be hosted in this area, and it draws other

K’OOK! recently added a large modern kitchen. It’s used to demonstrate products and let customers sample new recipes.

interested people in from the street to watch. Once a week, on Saturdays, there is also a product demonstration and tastings, so the store has become a place for people to gather socially.

K’OOK! also has a beautiful coffee bar. Shoppers can sample coffee or any of their other special drinks at the table in the shop window or at the kitchen

Continued on page 50...



HomeStyle

HOUSEWARES SHOWCASE

Your guide to the most exciting new product launches at the Toronto Gift Fair



ABBOTT - Booth 11025 & 11229 (Congress Centre North)

The Verona collection of '50s inspired glassware features tight vertical optic glass that is trimmed with a 10 karat gold rim. This stylish collection brings glamour and sophistication to every table.

CUISIVIN - Booth 7338

The new Cuisivin Caffè Collection includes four new distinct coffee cup sets specifically designed for Americano, latte, cappuccino and espresso. Attractively gift boxed, the cups are perfectly curved and thickly walled. The crystal-clear cups are designed to swirl coffee as it is poured for an exceptionally good crema and to release the full potential of aromas and flavour profiles.



CHEF'S CHOICE by Edgecraft - Booth 7820

The new Chef's Choice International SmartKettle is a contemporary Cordless Electric kettle with a 1.3 quart capacity. Finished in brushed stainless steel, the kettle quickly heats water with a single button. It offers six different settings – Delicate, Green, Oolong, White, French Press and Boil.



COUNSELTRON - Booth 7229

The PL8 professional cubing mandoline has blade adjustment knobs for a seamless change between the built-in straight and cubing blades, eliminating loose parts. Users can slice, julienne and cube with four adjustable slicing thicknesses.



LE CREUSET - Booth 7135

This set of five oval bakers are offered in popular cherry red. The baking pans nest together for easy storage. The wide, shallow cooking area exposes ingredients more directly to heat for a crispy topping.

See all of these new products on display August 7th to 10th at the Home Style Housewares Showcase display in Hall 7 of the Toronto Congress Centre South



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DANICA - Booth 7403

An ideal butcher block for any size kitchen, this rectangle End Grain carving board features both a juice canal and low profile hand grips for effortless transport. This Teakhaus butcher block by was built for carving and serving. It will stand the test of time, showing minimal knife marks with heavy duty use. Flip



the board over for a completely flat surface. Teakhaus by Proteak sources all of their Teak wood from sustainably responsibly managed plantations. All Teakhaus products are FSC Certified.

DANESCO - Booth 7103

The Flint retractable, refillable lint roller recently won a Red Dot Award for design. The innovative roller stays clean and never sticks to things it shouldn't. Perfect for the closet, car, purse or suitcase, it has a two step refill system. When finished, simply pull on the refill roll and pop in the next one. It uses Japanese paper that's easy to peel.



SANDPIPER DISTRIBUTING - Booth 7708

The euroSCRUBBY is a versatile, multipurpose scrubber. It's safe for non-stick cookware, cast iron skillets, glass/ceramic cook-tops, bathtubs, outdoor furniture, hardwood floors and more.

DAVID SHAW DESIGNS - Booth 7314

The Transforma Series grinder is offered as a rotary drum grater (shown) or meat grinder with interchangeable base. It has three laser sharp drums, a fine and course grater and a slicer. The suction base and extra wide table clamp keep it securely fastened.

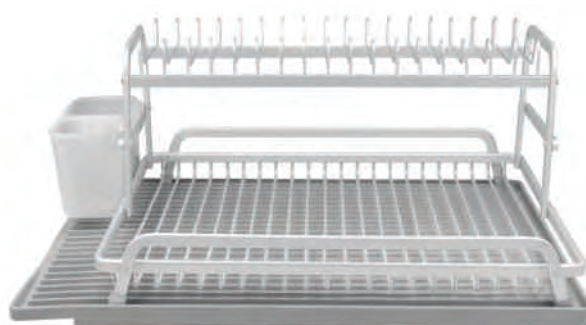


INTERCONTINENTAL MERCANTILE - Booth 8229

InterContinental is the new Canadian distributor for the innovative Lekue product line.

One of their top selling items is this popcorn maker that lets users prepare home-made popcorn quickly and easily.

A silicone mould that allows users to make popcorn in the microwave, with no ingredients other than the kernels. Fresh popcorn is ready in just minutes with users controlling all the ingredients.



JASCOR HOUSEWARES - Booth 7213

Jascor will debut the new *tada* collection. The line includes this two-tier dish rack with a silicone drying mat. It's the 'neat' way to dry, with a rust-resistant rack and adjustable cutlery basket.

HOUSEWARES SHOWCASE



MICROPLANE - Booth 7334

Grating ginger is easy with this new 3-in-1 Ginger Tool. Crafted with original Microplane stainless steel blades, the sharp, efficient rasp-like tool features a peeler on one side to quickly remove the peel of the ginger root. A wide panel incorporates a fine blade with a razor-sharp, angled blade towards the bottom of the tool.

PADERNO - Booth 7806

New from Paderno, this durable stainless steel stock pot and steamer set comes with a 25 year warranty. It's suitable for all cooktops including induction. It's also safe for the oven and the dishwasher.



PORT STYLE ENTERPRISES - Booth 7830

Inspired by the oldest British university towns, the Varsity range by Mason Cash features several chip-resistant earthenware mixing bowls that nest for practical storage. Made in Portugal.

ORLY CUISINE - Booth 7287

The JOSEF STRAUSS Tough Pan is now offered in new sizes: 20cm and 32cm. Resistant and durable, they feature an eco-friendly coating with no PFOA. The thick cast aluminum construction will not warp and it has a comfortable ergonomic bakelite handle. The pans are suitable for all heat sources, including induction.



SBO DISTRIBUTORS (PEUGEOT) - Booths 7222 & 11653 (Congress Centre North)

The Zanzibar is a unique, multi-pepper mill set that features interchangeable compartments, each filled with a curated selection of exceptional peppercorns. The unit is easy to fill and change, allowing users to select the perfect flavours for each type of food. The set comes with a handy booklet filled with advice and recipes.



RICARDO (Starfrit Gourmet) - Booth 7420

This new cocktail set includes a stainless shaker, muddler, strainer, measuring cup, citrus zester and a handy cocktail guide. The stylish set comes in a drawer-like box that is reusable and easy to store.



HOUSEWARES SHOWCASE

SWISSMAR - Booth 7322

The stylish new Andrea mills are available as a set from Swissmar. The contrasting crisp, clear acrylic and the natural polished granite adds a dramatic touch to any tabletop. The ceramic multi-purpose mechanism is easily adjusted with the simple turn of the knob. The mills sets are available in either four-inch or six-inch sizes.



TRUDEAU - Booths 7068 & 7122

This Wine Pump is part of the company's newly redesigned Wine and Bar collection. It includes two stoppers and preserves wine freshness by preventing oxidation up to one week. Laboratory tested for performance, it's available in silver with beautiful black chrome accents.



INTERNATIONAL INNOVATION (VACU VIN) - Booth 7421

Vacu Vin presents the Swirling Carafe, a glass carafe nestled onto a rotating, natural cork turntable. With just a nudge, the carafe gently turns and rolls on the bearings built into its base in order to aerate fine wines.



VENTURES INT'L - Booth 7327

The New York Spice Grinder leaves no mess on the table after use. Its unique ceramic mechanism does not corrode and grinds most spices and sea salt. It's ideal for tabletop use or cooking. This stylish grinder has an angled top that can be used like a spoon to sprinkle spices. The washable mill allows for easy and quick cleaning. A simple action adjusts the output from coarse to fine spice powder while an easily removable mechanism and poly-carbonate-body mill are both dishwasher safe. The mechanism has a 20-year limited warranty.



WILD EYE DESIGNS - Booth 8439

The 'Kitsch N Glam' line includes charming mugs, aprons, oven mitts, stacking bowls, measuring cups, mixing bowls, and baking utensils for the novice or professional chef. This 100% cotton apron and oven mitt with silicone insert features an adorable owl print.



ZWILLING J.A. HENCKELS - Booth 7419

The Prédicat wine glass collection is sure to enhance any dining experience. These premium wine glasses are made from high quality crystal for durability and brilliance. They are available in a wide variety of shapes and sizes to complement the distinctive flavour of all wines.





Cooking demonstrations are popular with customers, above. The store was designed by the owners and has a clean, streamlined look with black and white shelving, below.



bar. The coffee bar can be clearly seen from the street, which is an enticement for passers-by.

In the back of the store, there is a separate corner for food products. The placement of this area was deliberate, so that customers who come in for the very popular olive oil have to cross the entire shop floor, passing directly by the many wonderful products on display. This corner is dubbed 'The Filling Station',

for obvious reasons.

At K'OOK!, the customer firmly takes centre stage.

"Whether it is personal attention, service, the shop layout or the activities we organize – everything we do, we do for our customers," says Karen. "We aim to be a store where people love to browse and feel that they are truly cared for. In the coming years, we will focus on retaining our current customers

through continual innovation, and on broadening our horizon outside the region, through advertising and social media. We are also aiming to entice more people to our web-store."

The *gia* expert judges and jury were very impressed with K'OOK!'s approach to innovation in social media. For example, to ramp up knowledge and spread the word of OXO utensils, they invited a group of bloggers to the store to test the products and make comments. Word spread like wildfire.

"However, no amount of advertising can beat the sight of happy customers, so that is what we focus on, making our customers happy. And then we are very active on social media – Facebook and Instagram – with at least two posts a week. Some 4,500 customers receive our monthly newsletter," says Anne.

Branding is very important to the ongoing success of K'OOK! The immediately recognizable bold black and white logo is proudly displayed on hanging signs outside and on bags, and staff members wear black T-shirts with 'K'OOK!' emblazoned across the front.

"We and our staff receive regular product training from our suppliers so that we are always learning and fitting products into our brand. We take our staff to trade fairs, wholesalers and suppliers to give them a feel of the brand names we stock in our store," she adds.

Really, the story of K'OOK! is one of two friends who wanted a different life, and were brave enough to go out there and get it.

"What started off as an exciting adventure 11 years ago, has now become a flourishing business," says Karen. "But no matter how much has changed at K'OOK! over the past decade, the team enthusiasm has remained the same. Our customers have good reasons for saying: 'This is a shop that really makes you want to buy things'."

For more information about the *gia* program, please contact Piritta Törrö at piritta.torro@inspiredconnection.fi. Additional information is also available online at www.housewares.org/show/gia-retail.

A Danish treasure

This year, Illums Bolighus celebrated seven successful decades in the business *and* became one of the top retailers in the world at the Global Innovation Awards

By Michelle Hespe

When Sofie Molls, the marketing manager of Illums Bolighus, took to the stage at the IHA's Global Innovation Awards in Chicago, there was a palpable sense of elation in the air. After a heartfelt speech, she finished with the comment: "We've waited 70 years for this."

It's an impressive accomplishment, to run a successful business for seven

decades. And during that time, the three pillars that give Illums Bolighus its core identity have never changed: design, quality and superb service.

Established in 1941 in Copenhagen, Illums Bolighus now has seven stores across Scandinavia. They are like design centres, or department stores, in terms of merchandising. Throughout the gradual expansion, the three pillars have

been refined, but all staff today have the same aims as those before them: showcasing superb design, always having the finest quality products on offer, and making sure that customers have an extraordinary experience every time they visit one of the stores.

"Illums Bolighus is an old lady who is turning 75 years this September," says Sofie. "The metaphor of a classy lady



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with good taste who never compromises might be the best way of describing Illums Bolighus. We stay true to our brand, and do not disappoint our customers. Our customers expect to find a combination of classics and modern design, sublime customer service, and innovation that reflects our DNA. Our philosophy is simple: to give every single customer a total experience in recognizable surroundings, where we display handpicked Scandinavian design."

Just like an exhibit at an art gallery, or a performance at a theatre, all staff at Illums Bolighus put so much effort into creating an experience to remember.

"It's crucial that every customer has a unique shopping experience, hence our engaged and service-minded employees are highly valued," says Sofie. "Our vision is to maintain our position as a leading centre for lifestyle and interior design, but to also be results-oriented, cost-efficient, and to focus on develop-

ing our cooperative agreements."

Illums Bolighus aims to inspire visitors with outstanding visual merchandising, an inspiring product range, vibrant PR and advertising campaigns, and always, a trendsetting environment.

"The atmosphere and overall theme is inspired by Scandinavian minimalism, both in colours and materials selected," explains Sofie. "Our stores are airy to create a sense of quality, not quantity. The same applies to noise. We do not use any voice or music systems as it may distract or annoy customers."

Being a go-to centre for design, visual merchandising is taken very seriously at Illums Bolighus. "The visual merchandising team consists of well-educated, hand-picked creative spirits with a passion for design," says Sofie.

The team develops ten annual themes in January, and those themes are then presented in window displays, colour schemes and decorations in-store. For

example, Sea & Sky, Candy, and Dots & Pearls are themes created by the visual merchandising team that incorporate the latest trends in material, colors and shapes.

"Our visual merchandising team puts great effort into creating the same universe and atmosphere in all of our seven stores," Sofie says proudly. "They therefore travel between all stores making sure that themes, display windows and set designs are harmonious across all of Scandinavia."

The *gia* jury and judges were impressed by Illums Bolighus' marketing plan, which is executed in Denmark, Norway and Sweden simultaneously. They operate on a seasonal plan, which underlines the synergy between visual merchandising and marketing activities.

"The annual themes are presented in our window displays and in-store colour schemes, and then followed through in our print advertising,



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newsletters and social media,” explains Sofie. “Our print advertising includes both brand-building image spreads and smaller advertising, focusing on special offers. And very importantly, our photographers shoot all images. We never use shots from suppliers because our advertising identity relies on our trademark styling in photographs.”

Every year, Illums Bolighus produces a 148-pages catalogue, distributed to 500,000 customers in Scandinavia. “It is highly anticipated and is often referred to as ‘the catalogue’,” says Sofie.

Staff training is a major focus for this design mecca, because without confident staff explaining, using and recommending new designer products, and understanding why the classics are so well loved, they would not have the reputation that they do.

Every new employee has a one-day introduction where they are taken through every aspect of the company, with the help of short movies instead of more typical PowerPoint presentations. Movies are shown to new staff members that illustrate the company’s DNA, how

to gift-wrap, what good customer service means, and how their visual merchandising team works. Before the busy Christmas period arrives, for instance, every staff member must have read the new Christmas catalogue, know the thoughts and ideas behind the store decorations, and be acutely aware of product trends in order to advise customers on good purchase decisions.

“Staff are well-prepared and informed when entering the Christmas shopping season, which results in satisfied customers and staff that are very secure in what they are saying and doing,” says Sofie.

Despite Illums Bolighus having been around for 75 years, being a part of *gia* was something that Sofie not only enjoyed, but also found to be a great learning curve.

“Producing the requested material for entering *gia* was part of a big learning process, which made us see the brand from an outside perspective,” says Sofie. “Not only did we have to outline arguments as to why our brand is special, we also learned – through

some in-depth arguments – that we’re actually unique. That was a confidence boost for everyone!”

As Illums Bolighus is a veteran on the retail scene, they are well-placed to give some advice to new arrivals on the scene. “If you have strong vision, and good products and service, you will succeed with time. You should be prepared, because hard times will come. But when they come, be consistent, and do not change your vision and strategy, because if you do, you are changing the core of your brand, and then you lose the power of what you have already created. Ultimately, it is this strong sense of brand that ensures Illums Bolighus’ continued success.”

*For more information about the *gia* program, please contact Piritta Törrö at piritta.torro@inspiredconnection.fi. Additional information is also available online at www.housewares.org/show/gia-retail.*

For more information about the International Home + Housewares Show and to pre-register for the 2017 Show, taking place in Chicago on March 18 to 21, 2017, please visit www.housewares.org.





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Star power

With a *Toronto Star* column, a new cookbook and a popular kitchen store in Quebec, Ricardo has become one of the busiest chefs in Canada



Last April marked the launch of a new partnership between celebrity chef Ricardo and the *Toronto Star*. Now every week, *Star* readers get exclusive new content, including recipes and videos from Ricardo across all their platforms: in the paper, on the website and on the *Star Touch* tablet application.

Of course, Ricardo is no stranger to media attention. In the last few months

alone, Ricardo's been a guest on Canada AM, Cityline and Breakfast Television in Toronto. He will soon be promoting another new baby as well: his English cookbook *Slower is Better*, jam-packed with 75 slow cooker recipes. It's officially launching this fall, when Ricardo will also be releasing a new publication on the French market.

Busy is happy for Ricardo, who in addition to his publication empire also runs *Espace RICARDO*, a housewares store in Saint-Lambert, Quebec, which carries his own brand of kitchen tools, cookware, bakeware and tableware (also available online at ricardocuisine.com and through retailers nationwide), as well as many other labels.

Although Ricardo has many projects on the go, he loves to remain involved in the development of his kitchen accessories line. He still tests and approves every single item.

He continues to bring innovation, style and functionality to kitchens across the country. The first RICARDO small electric slow cooker was launched in 2015 and the appliance has been leaping off the shelves ever since. This fall, RICARDO will be launching a multi-function rice cooker, along with 20 other new products.

Espace RICARDO also houses a chocolate shop called *Mama Choka* and, since the spring, *Café RICARDO*, a roaring success among local gastronomes.

Along with his English magazine, available Canada-wide since 2014, all these initiatives mean it's easier than ever for Ricardo – a man of taste – to follow his passion and share his unique vision of food and family from coast to coast.

(In June, *Ricardo* was recognized as Canada's Best Magazine Brand at the National Magazine Awards.)



Ricardo and his team, top left, welcome customers at his Saint-Lambert store which now features a cafe and his own products alongside other national brands.





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Stovetop Style

What's new in stovetop cookware, skillets and frypans



All-Clad's newest cookware innovation is called d3 Armor, shown left and below. It features an innovative bonded matrix which provides better release than a traditional non-

stick pan; without compromising All-Clad's searing and browning capabilities. Ideal for cooking everything from eggs to seafood, the d3 Armor range provides perfectly even heat with its tri-ply construction allowing home cooks to achieve the best results. The assortment of five shapes are each oven and broiler-safe to 600°F and are designed of metal that will not wear down over time. The new d3 Armor cookware also comes with All-Clad's lifetime warranty.



A range of new fry pans from **RICARDO** are now available with The Rock patented non-stick coating technology, which is said to be three times more durable. The exclusive patented handle can act as a tool holder and all pans are induction ready. Shown below is the 11-inch deep frypan with lid. A multi-pan and wok are also available, both with lids.



Ultra-durable and versatile, **Cuisinart's** 11-Piece Five-Ply stainless steel cookware is suitable for all stovetops, including induction. The five-ply construction heats up fast and 'Heat Surround' technology distributes heat evenly. Oven-safe up to 500°, it features stainless steel lids that fit tight and tapered rims ensure drip-free pouring. Two open-stock skillets are also available separately. Also new from Cuisinart is a 10-Piece Induction non-stick ceramic cookware set, below. Each piece features a scratch-resistant exterior made with heavy gauge aluminum. The interiors feature Cuisinart Ceramica Polar White non-Stick technology to keep food free of toxins and full of natural flavour. Ergonomic handles stay cool on the stovetop. The set is also oven-safe up to 450° (tempered glass covers are oven-safe up to 350°).



Counseltron's 10 inch Cast Iron Pan by Lodge features a modern design with updated handles and sloped sides. It is made in the USA, is foundry seasoned and can be used on all cooking surfaces including grills and campfires. It is a timeless piece and still offers all the functions of which cast iron is known for

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TORONTO CONGRESS CENTER DANICA BOOTH 7403

Stovetop Style



The Strauss Quantanium La Crêpière pan from **Orly Cuisine**, left, is now available in a new 24cm size with induction capabilities and ergonomic handle. Quantanium coating is reinforced with titanium for outstanding resistance to scratching, abrasion and wear. Heavy duty cast aluminum construction ensures fast and even cooking. The new Strauss Tough Pan, right, now comes in 20cm and 32cm sizes. Made without PFOA, the thick cast construction will not warp. It has a comfortable ergonomic bakelite handle and a durable marble coating design.



The Performance range of woks, below, from **DanESCO** feature a heavy 1.8mm gauge carbon steel body and beech wood handle with hanging loop. The woks are available in two sizes with a flat base that sits on any stovetop, including induction. They're also suitable for use with metal tools.



NPD studies show that 40% of men do all of the household cooking, and 17% do 'most of it'. Those men tend to research cookware purchases and prefer copper pots and cast iron skillets.



Swissmar is introducing a brand new collection of beautiful stainless steel cookware by Mauviel of France. The M'Cook c2 collection, above, features five layers of materials to provide perfect conductivity and fast, uniform heat distribution. The first interior layer is 18/10 stainless steel for quick cleaning. The next three layers are aluminum, a good conductor of heat, and 18/10 stainless steel, while layer five is magnetic stainless steel for induction cooking. The handles are made from cast stainless steel with an iron electroplated finish and are attached with sturdy stainless steel rivets.



This spring **Paderno** launched their new 11-piece "Artisan Accent" hand hammered cookware set. Made from fused 18/10 stainless steel, a middle heat conducting layer and outside magnetic stainless steel for induction stovetops, this elegant set is finished with a unique hand-hammered finish. The tri-ply cookware has securely riveted handles that are safe for all stovetops and oven safe up to 500F. Backed by Paderno's 25 year warranty this set includes: 1.4L saucepan & cover, 2L saucepan & cover, 3L saucepan & cover, 5L Dutch Oven & cover, 2L Saute Pan & cover and a 2L steamer.

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Stovetop Style



The versatile new 4.7-litre stainless steel braiser from **Le Creuset** is designed for searing or slow cooking. The braiser evenly distributes heat and locks in optimal moisture with its tight fitting lid. This is the latest addition to Le Creuset's Stainless Steel collection.



This new 3.5-litre covered sauté pan from Le Creuset is offered in nine colours: Soleil, Flame, Palm, Caribbean, Marseille, Cherry, Dune, Bonbon and Licorice. A traditional enameled cast-iron cooking vessel, the pan is perfect for braising meats or simmering soups. The domed lid circulates heat and moisture.



Meyer Canada is behind **Breville's** new foray into the cookware market with the launch of the Thermal Pro gourmet collection, shown above. Available in both clad stainless steel or hard anodized versions, Breville cookware features sets as well as several open stock options. The clad line has features such as laser-etched volume markings for easy measuring during food prep and cooking (frypans excluded), as well as flared and rolled-edge pan rims for drip-free pouring. The hard anodized line offers a triple-layer non-stick for quick food release, as well as handles that are seamlessly dual-riveted to keep pan interiors clean. The warp-resistant bases are safe for induction stovetops. They're also oven and dishwasher-safe with a lifetime warranty.



SmartSteam cookware from **MAKER Homeware** is offered in six different sizes. The pans utilize SmartSteam technology to lock in foods' natural moisture, requiring less water and oil. They come in black, crimson red or copper bronze. The company's steam grill pans, below, feature a tempered glass lid for faster cooking. The rectangular or round pans come in three colors. The ceramic coating is PTFE/PFOA free, and the sloped bottom allows oils to run into the sides of the pan.



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Cole & Mason brings a fresh angle on seasoning with the **Inverta Select** range of Salt & Pepper Mills.

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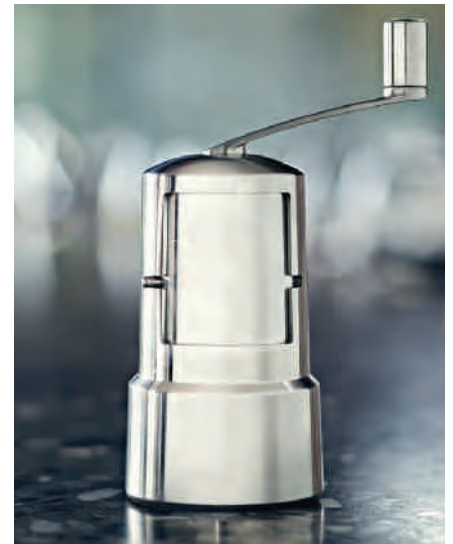
The daily grind

The latest designs in pepper mills and spice grinders



Milan mills from **Peugeot** combine the natural beauty of beech wood with a matte black or white wheel-shaped head. The result is a clean, simple contemporary look. It features the iconic Peugeot spice-specific mechanism. It's fully adjustable with a U>Select ring for unsurpassed precision adjustments.

CrushGrind mills from **David Shaw Designs** handle everything from Pepper to Flax. One mechanism grinds it all – the only thing that changes is the housing, from glass to black walnut. The Kala, available in black or stainless, sits upside down and leaves no spice dust. High output is possible with a large opening for easy filling. CrushGrind will launch 11 new grinders this summer. The Copenhagen crank handle grinder, below right, is made of stainless steel in a distinctive retro shape. The new Toronto mill, below left, has a sleek, iconic shape with a black body and stainless steel band.



Unlike some mills, the New York Spice Grinder set by Spice Ratchet leaves no mess behind. Its unique ceramic mechanism does not corrode and grinds most spices and sea salt. Available from **Ventures International**, the mills have an inverted design and angled top that can be used like a spoon. The mills are also washable for quick, easy cleaning.

After the successful launch of the 20cm mills last year, **Le Creuset** has released a smaller 11cm version, below. It's the perfect hostess gift. Sold separately, the mills are available in several colours such as Caribbean, shown below. The



strong ceramic grinder perfectly cracks peppercorns while the corrosion-resistant mechanism is ideal for use with sea salt.

Trudeau's new Adagio flax seed mill, below left, has an oversized ceramic grinder to evenly dispense the seeds for consistent flavouring. Also new, the Adagio 7.5-inch mill set, below, has a clear body with 18/8 stainless steel accents. The pepper mill has a sharp, durable carbon steel grinder and the salt mill has a corrosion-resistant ceramic grinder.



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Spice Mills



Cole & Mason's Derwent Salt and Pepper mills from **DanESCO**, left, are now available in a fiery copper and gunmetal grey. They each feature the same gourmet precision hardened carbon steel mechanism. The salt mills have a ceramic mechanism. The Cole & Mason Hampstead electronic pepper mill, right, can easily and accurately season any meal at the push of a button. The brushed stainless steel mill has an integrated LED light that turns on when the mill is in operation.



This new Nutmeg Mill from **Swissmar** is available in a traditional holiday red finish. It can grind up to four whole nutmegs thanks to the extra-large capacity of the reservoir. The easy-turn handle makes grinding effortless. The highly functional nutmeg mill is also available in a classic black finish.



The new **Breville** Boss To Go Plus personal blender features a unique stainless steel milling and grinding container. It's perfect for grinding fresh spices at home or for milling grains (and even almonds) into flour. With consumer's appetite for dual-use products, Breville designed the Boss To Go Plus for on-the-go lifestyles, with the same versatility and powerful Kinetix blade system found in the original Boss, all within a smaller, counter-top friendly size.



Innovative new Torre Mills from Swissmar are offered in a variety of materials; both natural beech wood, stained chocolate finish beech wood, an acrylic body with wood top; and a stained chocolate finish and acrylic body with a polished granite top. Torre Mills (the word is Spanish for "tower") feature a ceramic multi-purpose mechanism with a 10 year warranty.



The new **RICARDO** 2-in 1 salt and pepper mill, left, offers a double ceramic grinding mechanism that always stays sharp. Adjust the grind settings with a simple turn of the knobs. The bottom part catches remnants after each use to keep tabletops clean. RICARDO is also introducing a new salt cellar, right. The body is made of ceramic and the lid of bamboo wood. It has a magnetic lid that is ideal to preserve sea salt and other spices.





for the kitchen



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Tabletop trends

New styles in casual dinnerware and flatware

The Lys collection from Duraalex is named after the Lys River which runs through France and Belgium because of its clarity, simplicity, utility and beauty. The mechanical and thermal resisting properties are suitable for cold or hot food, conveniently stackable and impact and chip-resistant. Distributed by [InterContinental Mercantile](#), Duraalex glassware products are recognized throughout the world. The company is the only glass manufacturer in the world that makes 100% of their products in France.



Consumers can add a bright splash of colour to their table setting with the 16-piece Sonata square porcelain dinner set, shown above. The bold red floral pattern sets a scene for fun and festive gatherings. Available from [InterContinental Mercantile](#), each set includes four dinner plates, four salad plates, four multi-purpose bowls and four mugs.



Denby knows that when it comes to tabletop fashion, bowls are the new plates. The company's new bowls, above, are versatile, practical and beautiful. Whether piled high on display in a cabinet or meticulously placed on the dining table, Denby bowls now come in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours that can easily be mixed and matched. Also new from Denby this year is the addition of the Burleigh brand, which is now shipping from the company's North American warehouse in New Jersey. Established in 1851, Burleigh pottery is handmade in England using traditional methods, such as the practice of tissue transfer printing using hand-engraved copper plates. Shown left is Burleigh's elegant Regal Peacock pattern, available gift-boxed.



for the table



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Tabletop trends

The HouseWarming collection of dinnerware/serveware from **Villeroy & Boch**, below, includes a variety of serving plates, small bowls and appetizer plates. Floral patterns, such as Mariefleur, Rose Cottage and Artesano Provençal, are playful and romantic. The new Quinsai Garden design, inspired by the exotic flora of Asia, has an elegant and classic look. The Artesano Original collection with its mix of acacia wood and pure white porcelain is clearly minimalistic and a perfect gift for purists.



The Nordic Bloom 16-piece porcelain dinnerware set from BIA, above, is a Scandinavian-inspired botanical pattern that blends modern and whimsical floral elements beautifully. The mix and match pieces come together to create a table that invites people to linger and enjoy good food and conversation. Distributed in Canada by **DanESCO**.



Fiesta Dinnerware has added a new Signature Bowl to its collection. The 18-ounce bowl, left, is ideal for salads or as a fruit bowl. It comes in all current Fiesta colours.



The Weekend line of ceramics from **Abbott** includes mugs, bowls, plates and teapots in ivory with a cottage chair design, left. Also new from Abbott is the Trio collection, right. Each piece is designed with a trio of birds in ivory porcelain. The line includes serving bowls and platters.



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Tabletop trends



Designed in California is the name of this new spring pattern from **Gibson Overseas**. This dinnerware collection includes various mix and match designs including metallic mix, square web, linear dots and pics and floral dinnerware pieces. Each set is accented by matte gold flatware for everyday elegance.



The **Lenox** Neutral Party line is a new twist on neutral dinnerware patterns. Three fresh designs, based on classics, are available in soft taupe, grey and beige colours that mix and match for creative flair. Consumers can create the table that goes from casual to elegant to every day. It's made of chip-resistant white porcelain that is dishwasher and microwave safe with a lifetime breakage replacement guarantee.

Weaves Gold flatware from **David Shaw Designs**, right, has a classic herringbone pattern with a textured surface and 18/10 stainless steel. Also from David Shaw, the Hammered collection, below, offers rustic elegance with a rose gold textured design. The stainless steel flatware has an electroplated metallic finish. Food safe and lead-free.



These oversize mugs from **Sagaform** are perfect for tea, coffee or soup. They have a fun design and cute sayings on the inside. Available in turquoise, cream and purple, they are almost six inches in diameter and 3.5 inches tall.



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See all that's new in housewares

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As the largest trade fair in Canada, the Toronto Gift Fair is where consumer trends begin for most retailers. For more than 25 years, it has attracted an international audience of retail buyers who come to network, see new trends, and explore new business opportunities with the hundreds of Canadian manufacturers who exhibit.

Organized and owned by CanGift, the event is currently held concurrently at the Toronto International Centre and the Congress Centre, where the majority of kitchenware exhibitors are housed.

Though housewares comprises a relatively small segment of the show, it is one of the most significant, with dozens of major brands on display that appeal to both independents and major buyers.

This year, CanGift begins a new phase with the focus on improving exposure for housewares exhibitors and bringing new excitement to the show floor for retail visitors.

Zwilling J.A. Henckels will be sponsoring the kitchen demonstration feature area this summer for the first time. Zwilling's 'Chef Kitchen' will bring

some of Canada's top chefs to the Toronto Gift Fair to create a variety of recipes.

Home Style is proud to sponsor a new Housewares Showcase featuring the best and brightest new products being launched this August. Each exhibitor has submitted one exceptional new product and they will all be showcased together in one convenient location in Hall 7 of the Congress Centre. Consult the insert in the centre of this issue for more information.

To register for the August gift fair email registration@cangift.org.

Toronto Gift Fair Product Preview



The ZWILLING Mungsten Damast Chef's Knife, above, features 107 layers of Damascus steel, an innovative contoured bolster and a beautiful Grenadill wood handle. The knife serves as a symbol of the "Made in Solingen" quality that has been part of the Zwilling heritage for 285 years. Zwilling will also show a new range of ergonomically designed kitchen utensils from Staub, right. **Visit Booth 7419**



Counseltron announces the launch of the new spiralizer by PL8. Addressing the latest trend in food preparation, the spiralizer can slice three thicknesses of beautiful spirals and ribbons of vegetables quickly and easily. The tilted ergonomic base and silicone grip handle ensure effortless results. The adjustable rotating blade settings are safely integrated with no loose parts. **Visit Booth 7229**

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Toronto Gift Fair Product Preview



Strauss Pro quality kitchen tools from **Orly Cuisine** are restaurant-grade and designed for professionals as well as home chefs. Each tool in this far-reaching collection features an ergonomic handle and is dishwasher safe.

Visit Booth 7287



The **Microplane** food slicer, above, is built to last with serrated blades sharp enough to cut through tomatoes. The clear container holds one cup while the non-slip base and soft touch grip make it easy to handle. It comes with a scraper to clean blades and grid. Also new from Microplane is the Flexi Zesti, below. This flexible kitchen tool has a built-in chamber to capture zest without any bitter pith and fits naturally into the curve of your hand. It comes in orange, yellow or lime green.

Visit Booth 7334



Dot tracking water bottles from Joseph Joseph help consumers reach daily hydration goals. The innovative lid records the number of bottles consumed and a new red dot appears every time a bottle is refilled and the lid is closed. Available from **DanESCO**, the BPA-free 20-ounce bottles have a wide opening and leakproof lid. DanESCO will also introduce Stasher storage bags, below. Made of 100% pure platinum silicone, these reusable bags are self-sealing, air tight and safe for the microwave, freezer and dishwasher.

Visit Booth 7103



Visit the **David Shaw Designs** exhibit to see these new BIVITA Gefu Sprouting Jars, below. These innovative miniature greenhouses provide the perfect climatic conditions to cultivate fresh sprouts in the kitchen. Fresh sprouts (alfalfa, mung bean, radish or lentil) grow in just one week and are ideal for use in salads. The glass dome design provides best lighting conditions near a kitchen window while ventilation is integrated into the base.

These adorable olive savers from David Shaw Designs, above, are designed to keep olives fresher longer. The containers are easy to find in the fridge and fun for serving indoors and outdoors. The olive savers are stackable and made of BPA-free plastic.

Visit Booth 7314



We'll Always Have Paris
With its iconic shape and unsurpassed functionality, the best-selling Paris Mill from Peugeot performs flawlessly in the kitchen, the dining room or at the grill. Now available in over 80 combinations of sizes and finishes, both classic or enhanced u>Select adjustments, the Paris Mill is often copied, but never equaled – and still made in France.

Best in class, the proprietary pepper grinding mechanism by Peugeot is designed specifically for peppercorns. Made of case-hardened steel for better results, more consistency and higher output. The two-stage technology, first cracks then grinds, releasing all the aromas. The iconic Paris mill is carved in PEFC certified beech wood sourced in the birthplace region of Peugeot in France.

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Toronto Gift Fair Product Preview

InterContinental Mercantile will display several innovative products from Lekue including this silicone bread maker. Shaped as a partially closed bowl, it allows steam to circulate inside, making the dough moist with a golden crust. Suitable for the microwave, it's also dishwasher-safe.

Visit Booth 8229



Port Style Enterprises will be showing the Caffenu cleaning capsule, a descaler designed for Nespresso coffee machines, as well as the Russbe line of reusable snack and sandwich bags, below. Each pack holds two lunch and two snack bags with a gusseted bottom and locking seal that keeps food fresh and prevents leaks. To clean, simply hand wash in soapy water. **Visit Booth 7830**



Consumers can enjoy delicious, grilled taste, year round with the **Chef's Choice** heavy-duty indoor electric grill. Create scrumptious grilled burgers, fish, veggies and more with delicious seared flavors anytime and most anywhere. The grill features 1500 watts of power and a ceramic non-stick coated cast aluminum grill plate that is easy to clean.

Visit Booth 7820



The new **Cuisivin** whiskey glass is made from German lead-free crystal. The short, tulip-shaped glass perfectly presents the fine nuances of any whiskey. The semi-flattened bottom is designed for subtle swirling to release the complex aromatics. **Visit Booth 7338**

Jascor Housewares will be showing two new iSi stainless steel whippers, right. The Dessert Whip Plus easily prepares fresh, pure whipped cream and is ready in a few seconds. It can be kept in the refrigerator up to 10 days and is easily refillable. Jascor will also present the over-sink drying mat by tada. It lets users dry the dishes right where they are washed. Made with FDA-approved silicone and reinforced with stainless steel rods, the simple, sturdy mat allows run off to drip directly into the sink. Roll it up and put it away when not in use.

Visit Booth 7213





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Toronto Gift Fair Product Preview



This classic enameled cast iron oval baker from **Le Creuset** is available in cherry red. There are five different sizes available in this shape that nest together for convenient storage. **Visit Booth 7135**



The Zyliss Tilt & Grate cheese grater from **Swissmar**, above, has four ultra sharp acid etched blades for coarse or fine cuts. The unique tilting function lets users see the amount of cheese while the nonslip base prevents the grater from sliding. With two sharp blades, the Zyliss spiralizer, below, creates perfect ribbons of vegetables. Simply insert the veggies into the top and twist.

Visit Booth 7322



The Spice Ratchet Blossom flax mill from **Ventures International** has an automatic opening and closing base for a mess free table. Offering superior nutritional value, crushed flax seeds contain high levels of omega-3 fatty acids, fiber, and cancer-fighting lignans.

Visit Booth 7327



Abbott will be showing a new line of Ironwork home decor products. Shown above, the large barrel design with candle. **Visit Booth 11025**



RICARDO will unveil a range of new items at the show, including this convenient rice cooker. The appliance features seven different settings including brown and pilaf. The large 20-cup capacity is perfect for large gatherings.

Visit Starfrit Gourmet at Booth 7420



Eparé is launching three new glassware sets, including this set of two double-wall champagne flutes. Distributed by **Don Schacter + Associates**, each flute measures 6.5 inches tall and can hold five ounces. They're made of top quality borosilicate glass that is both durable and heat resistant. The double wall design creates a dramatic optical illusion and prevents condensation. The flutes will keep the temperature of liquid hot or cold for a longer period of time while the outer glass remains safe to touch. They're safe for the dishwasher, microwave and freezer.

Visit Booth 7053



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Located on Level Three of the Jacob K. Javits Center, the HOME Collection of NY NOW will showcase 1,200 exhibitors focusing on design-forward products – specifically furnishings, home textiles, interior decor, tabletop, and gourmet housewares. NY NOW's HOME Collection features three carefully curated sections making it easy for retailers to shop across the entire category.

The Tabletop + Gourmet Housewares segment will feature a stunning collection of nearly 250 resources for home entertaining, gourmet kitchenware and specialty tabletop including product categories such as: glassware, serveware, dinnerware, cutlery and flatware, table linens, cookware, bakeware, kitchen gadgets, gourmet food, barware and wine accessories.

As the leader in innovative, modern design, Accent on Design will present a

curated collection of nearly 150 established and emerging design brands across all categories of product. This juried contemporary design showcase is curated by an independent selection committee with the following criteria in mind: original, creative and authentic product design; new and innovative use of materials; products which address and solve problems; a focus on contemporary design (as perceived by the jury); functionality; and consistent and continuous new product introductions.

The Home Furnishings + Textiles section offers a full range of mid to high-end decorative accessories, home textiles, and furniture for both indoor to outdoor use. A comprehensive collection of more than 500 leading brands showcasing the latest trends in furniture, lighting, bedding, floor coverings, wall decor, pillows and home acces-

sories. From traditional to contemporary the Home Furnishings + Textiles section has products to suit every style and price point.

This year, the special “A Night On Broadway” will feature Something Rotten on Monday evening at 7 p.m. This mash-up of 16th Century Shakespeare and 21st Century Broadway tells the story of brothers Nick and Nigel Bottom, two playwrights stuck in the shadow of that Renaissance rock star Will Shakespeare. When a soothsayer foretells the next big thing in theatre, the Bottom brothers set out to write the world's very first MUSICAL!

NY NOW's HOME Collection is a one-stop shop for a wide range of home decor, gourmet and entertaining needs. The summer 2016 market will open Sunday, August 21st and conclude on Wednesday, August 24.

NY NOW Product Preview



The doodle mug from Eat Sleep Doodle comes boxed with a black ceramic wash-off marker pen. It can be personalized and then washed, ready to start over, left. Kids will love the new doodle world map pillowcase, right, featuring a hand-drawn illustration packed full of fun facts, wild animals and exotic sea creatures. It comes with a pack of wash-out fabric pens (the ink washes out on a warm machine wash).

Visit Booth 7766





ITALIAN TABLE STORIES

Cake&Co

Serveware for "made with love" desserts



Trudeau.

For more information on these products, stop by the Trudeau Corporation booth #7068 at the Toronto Gift Fair or visit trudeau.com

NY NOW Product Preview

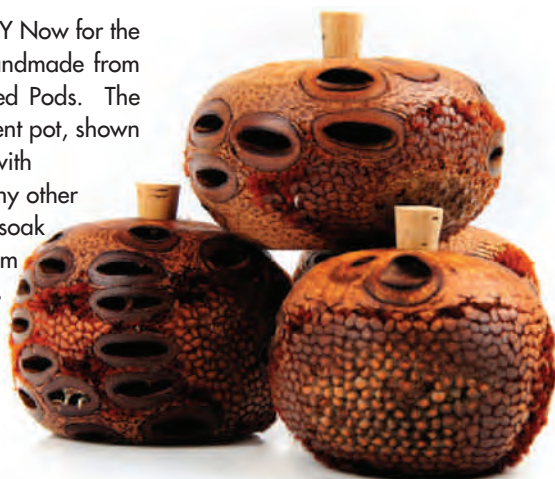


The Arinna copper tabletop collection from Ark of Crafts includes hand hammered Turkish trays, bowls, plates and boxes. The Arinna Copper Pedestal Bowl, left, is perfect for display or as a centerpiece. The copper bowl stands on its pedestal with two handles – a modern version of an authentic Turkish brazier. **Visit Booth 1075**



Color meets texture in this new organic glassware collection from **Lenox**. Manufactured by Italian craftsmen, the Creekside pattern features jewel-toned colors in two sizes, perfect for everyday use. **Visit Booth 3210**

Banksia Gifts is exhibiting at NY Now for the first time. The products are handmade from Native Australian Banksia Seed Pods. The most popular product is the scent pot, shown right. Simply fill the scent pot with Australian Eucalyptus oil (or any other essential oil). The banksia will soak up the oil and fragrance a room for weeks. The scent pot acts as a diffuser and makes a beautiful, unique and natural gift. **Visit Booth 6414**



Lagoon Pedestal Serving Bowls from Aesthetic Contents are hand crafted from earthenware ceramic and sustainable cork to make a bold centerpiece or dessert stand. The cork is easily removed so the ceramic can be used in the microwave or dishwasher. **Visit Booth 2667**



Corkcicle is bringing two new products to the industry this summer. The new Corkcicle Cigar Glass holds up to nine ounces of liquid and features a ledge that can be used to rest a cigar of up to 54 gauge. In addition, Corkcicle will also introduce the Invisiball, a BPA-free silicone ice form that the company says will create a crystal clear iceball without air bubbles or impurities. **Visit Booth 3540**



Casa Amarose will show this beautiful woven Oven Mitt and Pot Holder set. With a vibrant latin inspired pattern in either pink or blue and red, above, this playful potholder makes a fun gift for the chef. **Visit Booth 1030**

The Bartender's Knife from W&P Design is carefully crafted from water-resistant hardwood, polished brush and high quality steel. The knife has a multi-purpose blade. It comes with a natural sharpening stone to keep cuts precise. **Visit Booth 3861**



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This beautiful Salt and Pepper Shaker Set is crafted from high quality materials, including Zinc Alloy-Stainless Steel, and designed in Silver Two Tone Hammered E-coating technology. Sturdy and designed to last a lifetime, the set is also Tarnish-Resistant. **Visit Booth 2982**



The Happiness Hugs Earth Line is an environmentally conscious line of apparel for dogs. The sweaters are made from natural, undyed yak down that is soft, silky and warmer than cashmere. Each features a traditional Bhutanese motif to celebrate the spiritual connection between man and dog. **Visit Booth 507**



Designed in NYC, the Ichcha sisters are debuting a hand-made collection of tablecloths and mix and match napkins. The Indigo Pineapple Tablecloth is hand block printed and naturally dyed. The look is completed with hand printed napkins that are hand spun and hand woven from cotton sourced from organic farmers. **Visit Booth 437**

This handcrafted footed glass cake plate in grey and silver is from Badash Crystal. It offers the simplicity of alabaster enhanced with a touch of silver. It's also available in white glass and gold and white with silver. **Visit Booth 3040**



Q Squared NYC captures the nostalgia of the holiday season with the delicate details of the Yuletide Simply Holly dinner plate, below. Designed by Alaina Young, it's made of durable, 100% melamine. **Visit Booth 3140**



Twig New York will launch the Forget Me Not collection this July. The fine bone china has a hand applied decal and each piece comes individually packaged in a branded gift box. **Visit Booth 3756**



Romi Ceramics offers a selection of signature handcrafted porcelain housewares. With an angular edge and bold colours, these fresh new bowls are the ideal size and shape for serving ice cream, small salads or rice. They're cast in two layers, the outside is coloured porcelain and the inside is white. The bowls are glazed on the inside for easy cleaning. **Visit Booth 3744**

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Raise the bar with this sleek hand made Lotus wine rest from Peetal. The wine bottle rests snugly on a curved aluminum base with matte finish. The base also holds the removable lotus flower bottle stopper which is made from Peetal (meaning brass in Hindi) and stainless steel. This piece is truly a statement maker for any bar, with its strikingly simple yet elegant design.
Visit Booth 3050



Rosanna will be introducing the classic new Pacifica collection, shown above. Made of porcelain and gold, the elegant tableware must be hand washed to protect the finish.
Visit Booth 3362

MIHO will be displaying a stylish range of casual melamine dinnerware, made in Italy. The colourful plates are perfect for an al fresco lunch or dinner. They have an 8.3-inch diameter and are available in 12 different patterns to mix and match.
Visit Booth 3962



Phil Gauteau Wood Design will be showing a range of contemporary wood furnishing, gourmet wood serving boards and hand-turned wood vessels made from visually unique wood. The designs are sophisticated and organic, often made from locally sourced and reclaimed wood.
Visit Booth 9014



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Craig Hamilton

Sales Executive, Trudeau Corporation



Craig Hamilton is the kind of sales rep who will do anything for his customers. Just ask Sigrid Wolm, owner of Kitchen to the Table. Shortly after Sigrid opened her first store in Orangeville, Ontario, Craig showed up bright and early one morning for their scheduled appointment. Sigrid was in a panic, frantically trying to capture a bat that had snuck in overnight. Craig immediately sprang into action, capturing the bat with a net and a bucket, and saved the day. Sigrid has since become a close friend as well as a customer, but the incident reveals Craig's willingness to always go above and beyond the call of duty!

Born in Winnipeg in 1969, Craig moved a lot during his childhood whenever his father, Grant, who worked for The Bay/Simpsons as a store manager, was transferred. He arrived in Toronto in 1975, where he attended school. His parents separated in 1977 and his father left Simpsons to move to Calgary in 1986. He then launched Rafco Gifts after buying the Alberta and B.C. franchises for Rafter's and Panhandler stores as well as Abbingdon's Animals, a plush toy store.

(Liv Group eventually grew to 60 stores, including the Pot Pourri chain in Ontario.)

Craig was just a boy when his dad left for Calgary, but his foray into the retail world clearly had an impact on his son's future. After graduating from Western University in 1992, Craig spent a couple years contemplating his future before moving to Alberta to manage one of the Rafter's stores. Working alongside his father, Craig soon became merchandise manager, then a buyer. But he eventually learned that it isn't always easy to work closely with family and in 1995, he returned to Toronto.

Not sure of his next move, he decided to attend the January 1996 Toronto Gift Fair to do some networking. His experience as a buyer made him familiar to most housewares vendors and he was looking for a new opportunity. He found it at the Trudeau exhibit, where he ran into sales manager Philippe Trudeau. The Montreal-based com-

pany was looking for a Southwestern Ontario sales rep and though Craig hadn't planned on selling, he accepted the position and quickly found it was a perfect fit.

"We were looking for a young new talent to represent Trudeau and Grant Hamilton had been a long-time customer," recalls Philippe. "Being able to hire a bright young guy like Craig, who grew up in our industry, was a wonderful opportunity for us. Craig always tells it like it is and is very results-oriented. He also has a great sense of humour."

Having worked on the other side of the buying table, Craig had learned a lot from other sales reps and was able to adopt some of their best practices. He covered the S/W Ontario territory for nine years from his home office in Toronto and it involved a fair bit of travel. But he was young and single, and staying in hotels and eating in restaurants seemed like a great idea.

In 2005, Trudeau offered him half of the Greater Toronto Area, then all of it, plus his original territory. At one time, he handled about 450 gourmet shops. Today, he handles about 350 but also has responsibility for some national and regional chains, including The Bay, Home Outfitters, Kitchen Stuff Plus and Solutions.

His rise at Trudeau has been impressive, earning him industry recognition in 2012 as the CGTA's Sales Rep of the Year. But it's his relationship with his customers that has made Craig a favourite of retailers, both large and small. He is proud to represent a Canadian company with such a rich history (Trudeau has been around since 1889) and his enthusiasm for their products comes through loud and clear.

Craig loves the fact that independent retailers can make decisions on the spot but also enjoys the challenge of dealing with major buyers. Before each line review, he does extensive homework, exploring their current assortments and arriving prepared with a plan on how Trudeau can fit into their stores. "My job is to help the buyer do their job well," he says.

Craig acknowledges that the consumer has changed dramatically in the past decade and there are fewer retailers than ever before. But he believes those still in business are really strong and good at what they do. They need to find product lines that speak to their customers, and that's where Craig excels.

He learned a long time ago that sometimes you have to say no to a sale. A retailer may love a product, but if Craig feels it's not a good fit for their store, he will be honest right up front. He'd rather have satisfied customers than product returns.

As Daryl Katzenberg at Kitchen Stuff Plus explains: "Craig truly cares about ensuring that what he sells performs well for us. If I delist something due to poor sales, he almost takes it personally. This is a rare quality as some reps just care about the sale and placement of product without really considering if the item is the right fit for our environment. Craig is a rare breed. He possesses the type of personality that makes you want to buy as much as you can from him and he is a good friend."

Despite all the technological advances, the favourite part of the job for Craig is still the people. He's not on the road as much today, but enjoys the fact that every day is different. "Every day you have to find new ways to sell, new customers to reach," he explains. "The industry is changing so reps have to change as well."

Craig now works from home alongside his wife, Shawna, an occupational therapist. Their two children, Leah, three, and Jake, six, keep them plenty busy. But he still finds time to play golf and softball and coach his son's hockey team. He's also passionate about cooking, which ensures this dedicated rep can honestly say he stands behind all products he sells. 🍷

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