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Canada's Housewares Magazine

November 2016

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The Vacu Vin Swirling Carafe from International Innovation features a glass carafe nestled onto a rotating cork turntable that keeps wine aerated.

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# Trade Show **Calendar**

**January 10 to 17, 2017**

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Atlanta Convention Centre

Contact AmericasMart Atlanta - 1-800-ATLMART

**January 29 to February 2, 2017**

**TORONTO GIFT FAIR**

Toronto International Centre/Congress Centre

Contact the Canadian Gift Association

Visit [cangift.org](http://cangift.org)

**February 4 to 8, 2017**

**NY NOW**

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Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York City

Contact GLM at [www.nynow.com](http://www.nynow.com)

**February 10 to 14, 2017**

**AMBIENTE - FRANKFURT SPRING FAIR**

Messe Frankfurt – Frankfurt Exhibition Centre

Contact Neeta Correa at Messe Frankfurt Canada

Phone (905) 824-5017 or FAX (905) 824-5067

**March 18 to 21, 2017**

**INT'L HOME + HOUSEWARES SHOW**

McCormick Place, Chicago

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## Opening Lines

### Marking the end of an era

Perhaps I've been in denial, but I honestly did not think this day would ever come. I never thought I'd see the day when my friend Kate Wise would retire. For my entire 30-year career in housewares, she has been an integral part of this business, and my life.

I first met Kate shortly after taking over as editor of *Housewares Canada Magazine*. It was the fall of 1987 and I was looking for a top housewares retailer to feature on the cover of my first issue. As the buyer for Consumers Distributing, the country's leading catalogue retail chain at the time, Kate Wise was one of the most powerful merchandisers in the business. I contacted her about writing an article, she readily agreed, and before the interview was finished, I knew I had met a kindred spirit. We quickly became lifelong friends.

Kate is a force of nature. Impatient and persistent, she moves quickly, speaks quickly (with her proper British accent) and does not like to waste time. Lunch with Kate is always over in less than an hour, including the drive time! She likes to take charge and is the sort of person who gets things done. She always arrives early, and never stays late.

Over the years, I watched with admiration as Kate moved from retail buyer to company owner and then sales executive, first with Towle, then Fox Run, and now Port-Style. Selling was her forte and she excelled at it, whether she was dealing with small independents or national chain store buyers. With her razor sharp memory for pricing and tough negotiating tactics, her sourcing skills are exceptional. She can spot a hot new item a mile away, and will know within minutes of speaking to the supplier whether it has potential in the Canadian market.

Travelling the world, for both business and pleasure, has been a big part of Kate's life and she has connections everywhere. I used to say that Kate collects friends, and she keeps them forever. Each year, during the Frankfurt Fair, Kate organizes a 'girls dinner'. I am lucky to have been a part of most of these dinners and have met some fascinating women, many of whom changed my life, including the brilliant Betsie Stutz from California and gorgeous Alex Liddy from Australia.

Kate's loyalty to her customers and colleagues is far reaching. Always willing to lend a hand, or do a favour, I think half of this industry is probably indebted to her in some way or another. Though she is exceptionally competitive, her fellow vendors come to her for advice simply because nobody knows both sides of the negotiating table the way Kate does. Retail customers have become confidantes, and her home is always open to those in need. Her real estate agent is a former supplier. So is her financial advisor. She has found dozens of jobs for people, and hired dozens more. Her business savvy is matched only by her compassion.

To me, Kate has been both a big sister and a mentor. Many times, when I didn't know what to do, Kate would be the first person I'd call, and she always took the time to give me measured, thoughtful guidance. We have shared many personal triumphs and tragedies in 30 years. Our children have grown up, we've had businesses thrive and fail, we've seen the industry change in ways we never could have imagined. I've celebrated birthdays and anniversaries with her, and shared many, many glasses of red wine. I also watched Kate lose the love of her life, Ralph Lawry, yet still manage to stay strong, move forward and find happiness again.

Kate turned 70 this summer, and it makes sense for her to want to slow down, yet she's still the youngest, most vibrant 70-year-old I know. She's earned her retirement, and deserves all the happiness in the world. But that doesn't mean I won't miss her terribly because, starting next year, for the first time ever, I will be working in this industry without Kate Wise. I can't imagine what that will be like.



Kate Wise on the *Home Style Cruise* in 2005.

— Laurie O'Halloran  
laurie@homestylemag.ca



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## People In The News

• **David Ksiazkiewicz** has joined Browne Canada as strategic account manager. In his role, David will be responsible for maintaining and growing relationships with current customers, as well as developing partnerships with new potential business partners.

• Effective December 31st, **Sistema Plastics** will no longer be distributed in Canada by Port Style Enterprises. For continued service and support, contact **Andrew Rae** at 416-254-8854 or email [andrew@sistemaplasticsus.com](mailto:andrew@sistemaplasticsus.com)

• Following the appointment of Steve Matyas as President, North American Retail for Staples, Staples Canada has named **Mary Sagat** as its new President.

• The International Housewares Association has elected four new members to its board of directors: **Mark Buss** of

Govino; **William Endres** of Select Brands; **Melissa Kieling** of PackIt; and **Kristine Malkoski** of World Kitchen. In addition, new board officers were also elected. **Gregory Cairo** of Groupe SEB USA is the new chairman; **Brett Bradshaw** of Bradshaw International is now vice chairman; and Canadian **John Collins** of Neat-freak is the new treasurer.

• Joseph Joseph has appointed **Marc Mangus** as President, Americas. Mangus joins Joseph Joseph from Groupe SEB, where he held the position of V.P./U.S. sales, specialty and department stores. Prior to that, Mangus was V.P./U.S. sales at Zwilling J.A. Henckels.

• **Jose Linhares** is the newest member of the ARÉS team in Montreal. Jose will be responsible for the sales, purchasing, and marketing departments as well as developing new business opportunities

for the company. A well-known figure in the Quebec retail industry, Arés owner Dave Abrams met Jose over 30 years ago when he launched the Sony store concept. He has spent time at Linen Chest and at Claire de Lune where, as president, he helped revamp their concept, and rollout new locations.

• **Martha Stewart** was the keynote speaker at Alibaba's inaugural Tmall Super Kitchen event held in September.

## Letter to the editor

Your magazine is always a great read but the September issue, with all the feedback from retailers on the Toronto gift show, was stellar. Thank you for all that you do for the industry!

*Anne Drinkwater, Vice President Sales Danica/Now Designs*



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## Buyers were inspired at Tendance fair

More than any other trade fair, Tendance stands for change and the current challenges facing the international consumer-goods industry. Last August, more than 24,000 buyers took advantage of the event. The fair featured 955 exhibitors from 45 countries and offered retail buyers a perfect venue to place orders, discover new products, gain inspiration and cultivate contacts.

“Despite challenging issues facing the marketplace, the quality of the visitors and the volume of orders placed were

excellent. Tendance is the platform for doing good business”, commented Stephan Kurzawski, Senior V.P. of Messe Frankfurt. “From 2017, all the indicators point to growth. To this end, we are supplementing the profile of Tendance with new product groups and expanding existing ones.

The mood at the fair was given an additional boost by the plans of Messe Frankfurt to target the needs of the sector even more precisely with an integrated concept to be introduced next year. The concept calls for the reorientation of the long-established event with a three-pronged concept with a stronger focus on product ranges for the spring and summer of the following year. Buyers will also be able to see new products for the winter much earlier than at present thanks to the new timing of the fair at the end of June.

The next Tendance will be held at Frankfurt Fair and Exhibition Centre from June 24 to 27, 2017.

## Gourmet sees growth at Las Vegas Market

Las Vegas Market is continuing the expansion of its gourmet housewares offerings. Six new showrooms in the category will debut at the winter market, which is set to run from January 22 to 26, 2017, at the World Market Center.

Five of the showrooms will premiere on the C11 floor in January. In addition, Sagaform is opening its first West Coast permanent showroom in a 569-square-foot space on C-One.

The new showroom openings bring the total number of gourmet resources to over 400 in both permanent showrooms and temporary presentations.

“Las Vegas Market’s gourmet category expansion is continuing at a rapid pace, and we expect to announce more additions and expansions in the coming weeks,” says Dorothy Belshaw, president of gift and home décor, International Market Centers.



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# Even small retailers can consider online sales

Thinking of setting up shop online? E-commerce accounts for a growing share of retail spending and is an essential part of the customer experience. More than ever, people are researching, browsing and making purchases via retailers' websites and online marketplaces such as Amazon, Etsy and eBay. It has become the norm for consumers to first research a product online before purchasing it in a store, or check the price on their mobile device while in the store, and then buy it online!

It is possible to do both. Established omnichannel retailers such as Indigo and Roots are examples of successfully managed businesses with both an in-store and online presence.

The good news for small businesses is that omnichannel retailing can happen on any scale – and it has never been easier to sell online.

### *Is e-commerce right for you?*

Consider three things: you, your customers and your product. If your time and resources are stretched thin, expanding online will require you to work longer, take time away from your existing brick-and-mortar operations, or bring on additional staff.

Next, consider current and potential customers. Will selling online allow you to sell more to existing customers and/or reach new ones?

Start out with a few items and a basic site so you can assess the market and learn.

### *How do you get there?*

Many businesses sell over multiple channels. Selling on eBay or Amazon is usually best if you are selling a brand-name item but only if you can do so at a competitive price.

If you are going to sell on your web-

site, you need a shopping cart that integrates into a processor like Moneris for payments. There are a lot of choices out there, including Shopify, which allows small businesses to quickly create branded online storefronts, customize design, integrate shipping, keep track of merchandise and accept payments. Shopify and many of its competitors offer a variety of templates to choose from and are priced on a month-to-month basis using tiered pricing models.

### *What about payments?*

Using your in-store processor for online payments will simplify the accounting side of your life, and you can get a better deal from using the same company for all selling channels. You should also be sure to ask your payment provider about security.

### *Inventory, shipping and returns*

Most major shipping services have programs designed for small businesses that can be integrated into your e-commerce platform, automatically calculating shipping costs and allowing you to print labels and provide tracking numbers for customers.

In many cases, shipping the product out does not mean the transaction is finished. Free or inexpensive shipping options and generous return policies are often necessary to attract more customers. However, return rates for online sales can be up to three times higher than for brick-and-mortar stores.

Once you're online, you can explore the feasibility of drop shipping. If you are shipping products from your own storefront or warehouse, consider a platform that manages payments, inventory and other aspects of the business both in-store and online.

There is no question that establishing an e-commerce presence can grow sales from existing customers and help you attract new ones. However, while setting up an e-commerce platform may be as easy as a few clicks, like any change to your business, it should be done in a thoughtful and informed way.

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### JYSK to open 11 new outlets

Affordably priced Danish home furnishings retailer JYSK plans to substantially expand its Canadian operations. The company will open four more stores this year and in 2017, JYSK plans to open seven or more Canadian locations.

JYSK was founded in Aarhus, Denmark in April of 1979, and is now the largest Danish retailer operating internationally. The company operates over 2,300 stores in 40 countries.

A new store opened in Trois Rivieres, Quebec in September, and stores will open in Edmonton, Oshawa, Ontario, and at Heartland Town Centre in Mississauga this fall. JYSK will continue with expansion plans into 2017 with stores in Hamilton, Brampton and possibly Cambridge, Ontario as well as Laval and Sherbrooke, Quebec, Vancouver Island and in the Maritimes. The company is looking to particularly increase its brand awareness in the province of Quebec, where it currently operates eight locations.

JYSK's Canadian stores are usually about 22,000 square foot range but the new stores will be larger – typically in the 26,000 square foot to 30,000 square foot range, in order to accommodate an expanded furniture selection. Larger stores will also be able to house and display outdoor furniture inside stores, as opposed to outdoor displays that may be challenging for some retail locations.

JYSK celebrated 20 years of operating in Canada in 2016 with the launch of a new advertising campaign. The retailer's first Canadian location opened in Coquitlam, British Columbia in 1996, and its Canadian headquarters remains in the Lower Mainland. The west coast connection allows the company to be within proximity to its buying offices in China.

### Sales are brewing at David'sTea

David'sTea says it saw sales jump more than 25% in the second quarter as it continued opening new stores.

The Montreal-based specialty tea and tea accessory retailer reported sales of \$41.1 million, up from the \$32.8 million in the same period a year earlier, as it opened 10 new outlets in the first half of 2016.

The company had a \$2.3 million loss in the quarter compared to losses of \$52.1 million a year ago, though that included one-time costs such as those associated with its initial public offering last year. Its adjusted net income loss in the second quarter excluding one-time costs was \$2.3 million this year compared to \$1.6 million in 2015.

David'sTea ended the quarter with a total of 208 stores in Canada and the U.S., an increase of 26% from the end of the second quarter of fiscal 2015.

Holiday spending in the U.S. is expected to climb 3.6% this year over last, boosted by a rise in wages and consumers' access to credit, according to the National Retail Federation. The average increase over the last 10 years was 2.5%.

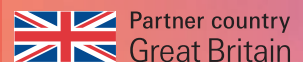
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## Industry News Update

### Costco set to expand in Canada

Costco is aggressively stepping up its expansion in Canada after years of strong success in this market.

The U.S. warehouse club giant, which has annual sales of close to \$21 billion in Canada and 91 stores across the country, will open seven new stores in fiscal 2017 – about double its most robust annual rate.

“I think the fact that we are opening so many right now has to do with very strong sales over the last few years,” Richard Galanti, the retailer’s executive vice-president and chief financial officer, told the *National Post*.

“We have been enjoying 5% to 9% (same-store sales) in local currency in each of the last few years up there, and so it keeps getting stronger.”

### Eataly arrives in Canada

Eataly, the international Italian food emporium, will open its first Canadian store in Toronto next year in partnership with the Weston family. Oscar Farinetti, Eataly’s founder, co-owner and chairman, said the Westons would have 52% of the real estate and retail project in Toronto, with Eataly taking the rest. “We’ve been looking for a location for a long time,” he said.

Eataly Toronto is expected to be located near the Holt Renfrew store in Toronto’s Yorkville area. (Holt’s is owned by the Weston family.)

By opening in Toronto, Eataly hopes to build on the success of its 50,000-square-foot store in lower Manhattan, which opened in 2010 and generates over \$85-million a year in sales. Eataly also has a store in Chicago and will open outlets in Boston, Los Angeles and a second Manhattan store in the Freedom Tower of the World Trade Center.

### Lifetime buys Copco

Lifetime Brands has acquired the Copco product line from Wilton Industries. Founded in 1960, Copco sells hydration beverageware, tea kettles and kitchen organization products.

Jeffrey Siegel, Lifetime’s CEO, says, “Copco has a rich history as a leader in the kitchen and has enjoyed double-digit growth in the important hydration and beverageware segment.”

### Le Creuset Montreal flagship

French cookware brand Le Creuset has opened a Montreal flagship location, as the company continues to open stores across Canada. The company currently operates eight Canadian stores, and it continues to seek retail space as it expands across the country.

The Montreal store measures about 800 square feet and is located at 2121 Crescent Street. It’s Le Creuset’s third Canadian high street location, following the opening of a 2,000 square foot Vancouver location in June of this year.



## Canadians list top cooking pet peeves

Almost half of all Canadian consumers say they don't want to cook after a long day at the office. Most of those polled would rather order take out food than go to the trouble of preparing a home-made meal. A recent



poll of nutritionists by Moen reveals that 43% of Canadians don't cook balanced meals on a regular basis – likely because cooking can be a real chore. Whether it's an explosion in the oven, a major spill on the floor, or a ruined dessert at the last minute, consumers have their "hot" buttons in the kitchen. Here are a few insights into common cooking pet peeves.

### *Post-cooking cleanup*

From washing dishes to wiping up countertops and floors, nearly half of Canadian adults (49%) list "cleaning up after they're done cooking" as amongst their biggest pet peeves when preparing a meal in their kitchen.

Thirty-six percent of Canadians also list "removing grease/tough residue from dishes" as a pet peeve when preparing a meal in their kitchen.

From baking gooey brownies to making a batch of mama's famous meatballs, cooking often means getting hands dirty. And that's not always a pleasant experience, especially when it comes time to wash them. Nearly one quarter of Canadians (23%) say "trying to use the sink faucet with dirty hands" is among their biggest pet peeves when preparing a meal in their kitchen.

### *Flying solo*

When it comes to preparing food, one is definitely the loneliest number. Twenty-five percent of Canadians say "having to do it all by themselves" is one of their biggest pet peeves when preparing a meal in their kitchen. Yet meal prep can be a great excuse for some family bonding time.

## Changing the way we shop for food

For 40 years, the grocery industry rarely underwent major changes but now it's changing weekly, says Gus Longo, one of the founders of the Longo's regional supermarket chain.

Consumers who used to buy milk, bread and eggs are now filling their baskets with bok choy and rapini. We've also seen the rise of the 'Gourman', men who love cooking and do all the family grocery shopping.

Longo's recently conducted a survey of 2,000 shoppers asking them to compare their shopping habits to the way their parent used to shop for food.

- 85% cook with olive oil and 90% consider poultry their top protein. This is a big change from 1956, when beef ruled and olive oil wasn't even available in the average grocery stores. Most people cooked with lard.
- 63% of shoppers buy yogurt every week as part of their daily diet.
- 52% of women identified themselves as being passionate about food, compared to 47% of men.
- Of the men who consider themselves foodies, 24% prefer cooking international and unique foods for special occasions, while 34% of women are more concerned with cooking healthy weeknight meals.

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## Kitchen Gadgets, Utensils and Tools



## Kettles, Tea Pots and Tea Accessories



## Outdoor Dining: Acrylics and Plastics plus Picnicware



## Cooking with Kids

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## Show Business

### Quebec Gift Fairs cancelled for fall

Following the cancellation of the Fall 2016 Quebec Gift Fair and the resulting feedback, the Canadian Gift Association board has decided to cancel all future fall shows in Quebec. There will no longer be a fall Quebec Gift Fair.

This decision does not affect the Spring 2017 Quebec Gift Fair, scheduled for March 26-29, 2017.

The cancellation of the fall Quebec Gift Fair creates an opportunity to put an extra week between future fall Toronto and Alberta Gift Fairs. The Toronto Gift Fair dates will remain the same. However, Northlands is in a position to accommodate the change in dates for the Alberta Gift Fair, resulting in the following schedule for the fall fairs going forward:

2017 - Toronto August 13-16;

Alberta - August 27-30

2018: Toronto - August 12 to 15;

Alberta - August 26 to 29

2019: Toronto - August 11 to 14;

Alberta - August 25 to 28

The Toronto gift fair will be consolidating, under one roof, at the Toronto Congress Centre in August 2019. It's now held at both the Congress Centre and International Centre.

### NY NOW awards best new products

During the summer market, NY Now revealed new product award winners in the show's Best New Product, Best in Market, Best Exclusive Launch, and Eco Choice categories.

For the Best New Product Awards, one winner was chosen from nine of the sections within its Home, Lifestyle and Handmade collections. In the Home collection, in Tabletop + Gourmet Housewares, Bambu's reclaimed cedar serving tray took home the award, while in Home Furnishings + Textiles, a Bohemian pillow from Aandaz took the honor.

"The slate of winners for the 'Best New Product' Awards represent the cream of the crop of what NY Now has to offer," says Scott Kramer, V.P./co-di-

rector, NY Now. "NY Now is the source for design-driven and fashion-forward trends, and our panel of expert judges took a number of factors into consideration to select the most exceptional products in an intensely competitive industry."

In addition, NY Now's Best Exclusive Launch Award, for a standout product that is making its debut exclusively at the summer market, recognized a hand blown glass decorative centerpiece from Axiom Glass.

In the 12th semi-annual Eco Choice Awards, NY Now recognized CounterEvolution for its "Looper" Lazy Susan in the most sensitive use of materials category. NY Now's Best in Market overall winner was the Design Dua dog bed by Design Dua.

### Fall market looks at hot tabletop trends

The fall New York Tabletop Market at the Forty One Madison building, held last October, showcased a range of design and lifestyle trends such as reactive glazes and gray colour stories. Another key tabletop trend for the home seen throughout the market was a range of designs that are influenced by hospitality tableware.

Taking design inspiration from diners and bistros is Kate Spade New York. The brand expanded its All in Good Taste assortment with diner-influenced glassware, beverage ware and storage.

Gibson's Just Dine took a similar design approach. Dinnerware with bistro blue borders was seen throughout the market, including Meyer's Paula Deen Country Barnyard pattern, which mixed bistro with a country feel.

From a more literal perspective, Arc International introduced its restaurant brand Chef & Sommelier stemware collection to the retail trade.

In addition, Vista Alegre brought a selection of white dinnerware patterns from its hotel offerings, and Robinson Home relaunched its Buffalo China brand, popular in food service, to the retail market.

### IHA will focus on the Smart Home

The future of housewares is quickly moving toward the smart home. With innovations from established and start-up companies, connected and smart products are quickly becoming a reality. The 2017 International Home + Housewares Show will spotlight these innovative housewares products in the IHA Smart Home Pavilion. The Show will be held March 18 to 21 at Chicago's McCormick Place complex.

To be located in the Hall of Global Innovation in the Lakeside Center lobby, the IHA Smart Home Pavilion will feature up to 12 exhibitors of connected and smart products. Companies will be selected by a jury of industry professionals and must meet exclusive criteria set by the industry experts.

"Connectivity is being incorporated into products all around – from light bulbs to coffee brewers to thermostats to ovens – and the IHA Smart Home Pavilion will spotlight these unique products that are changing the way we interact and live," says Phil Brandl, president of the International Housewares Association.

To help identify and recruit suitable companies that offer smart and connected products, IHA is working with two top influencers in the tech industry: Carley Knobloch and Mike Wolf. They will also create educational presentations on smart home developments and promote housewares innovations to consumer media at the show.

Knobloch is a digital lifestyle expert and a regular contributor on the *Today Show* and CNN. She's also a technology consultant and host of HGTV's *Smart Home*, where she makes smart homes easy, approachable and fun. Knobloch also has been featured in *Real Simple*, *Allure*, *Redbook* and *Good Housekeeping*.

Wolf is the creator and host of a leading smart home podcast, "The Smart Home Show." He combines in-depth market analysis with insightful commentary on the latest news and updates in the space. Wolf has also become a leading authority on the Smart Kitchen and is the founder of the Smart Kitchen Summit in Seattle.

In addition to the pavilion, smart products will also be recognized at the show with a category in the IHA Global Innovation Awards (*gia*). All show exhibitors can enter this category through submissions in the New Product Showcase. Finalists will be included in the New Product Showcases in the Buyers Clubs and in the IHA Global Innovation Awards display in the Hall of Global Innovation. The winner of the smart home *gia* will be announced at the invitation-only gala dinner on Saturday evening. Exhibitors will also be able to promote their smart home products through special signage, their Housewares Connect 365 profiles, the mobile app and Show directories.

The 2017 Show will feature more than 2,200 exhibitors from around the globe showcasing their new products throughout five expos and 62,000 total attendees.

More information on the Smart Home Pavilion is available at <http://www.housewares.org/show/iha-smart-home>.

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## Millennials behind a change in purchasing

Millennials, a driving force in the economy, are defined as people born from 1980 to 2000 (ages 16-36). According to a report by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, millennials are “vocal customers” who “influence the purchases of others.” And because of millennials, there have been many new trends in supermarkets and supermarket shopping recently.

The most influential changes are the use of technology and recipe-based shopping. Millennials have far fewer pantry items than previous generations. Phone apps and recipes can be easily accessed while shopping. Ingredients are often purchased for one-time use for a particular recipe and are used within a few days.

Millennials are sharing the shopping responsibility between genders. Once a female-dominated household activity, it is estimated that males account for more

than 40% of those who “claim substantial responsibility for the household grocery shopping.” This has caused a change in food marketing, packaging and grocery store design.

Another change brought on by the millennial generation in grocery stores is that millennials are not one-stop shoppers. Millennials are not as brand-loyal as previous generations. They also do much less shopping at traditional grocery stores. More purchases are being made at specialty stores, big-box retailers and convenience stores. This has caused stores to get creative on how they will attract shoppers.

The new term “grocerant” is one way that stores are attracting shoppers. Because millennials are diversifying their food shopping between different types of stores, some stores are now a hybrid of a traditional grocery store and restaurant. This grocerant style is apparent in urban areas, where the large grocery stores now have eat-in deli areas.

## SW selects 2017 colour of the year

Sherwin-Williams has selected grayish brown Poised Taupe for its 2017 colour of the year. The company says the hue is a modern take on a timeless classic and explained their choice in a statement: “It signals a new direction in society’s ever-growing thirst for beautiful neutrals that bring warm and cool tones together to create one irresistibly versatile colour”.

The colour definitely strikes the balance between bold and subtle.

Global online grocery sales grew 15% from 2015 to 2016. They now total \$48 billion or 4.4% of the world's grocery sales. U.S. online grocery sales soared 157% this year, according to a report from *Internet Retailer*.

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# Finding clarity amid the chaos

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



In any business, the daily challenges of streamlining information can seem overwhelming. Whether it be the dissemination of product information, unhappy customer experiences, supply chain frustrations or unobtained sales targets, a lack of clarity can be the culprit of any lagging business.

While people often value leaders with integrity, they tend to follow those with clarity. According to small business strategist Alan McCafferty, CEOs and executives who can clearly identify and articulate their desired goals (or vision statement) are 10 times more likely to achieve success and growth. McCafferty uses not-for-profits as the prime example of a business model with a clear vision, such as The Canadian Red Cross: Helping the Most Vulnerable.

While it's easy to reap the rewards of a hypermarket, having a clear definition of what is driving your business will go a long way in defining your success during rougher waters. I will be the first to admit that I am guilty of providing unclear direction at times. It is the expectation that your team should just "know" what needs to be done in all sorts of situations. Beyond that, the day to day information overload has become almost unmanageable. Emails, text messages, phone calls, unannounced visitors are all compounded by the general demands of everyday life and make for an overactive sensory environment.

Clarity is a habit which is developed (much like exercising). The more you practice and train, the more likely your muscles will be able to respond. To achieve a clear identity, however, you must first understand the difference be-

tween your mission and your vision.

A mission is who you are as a company and vision is where you want to be. Simple one liner statements are easiest for everyone to recite and will get your whole team running to the finish line together. My mission is quite simple; to provide the best possible experience all around. My vision is to continue building loyalty through those experiences. This goes for employees, suppliers, and most importantly customers. But how can I possibly achieve this utopian mission and vision when there are so many external factors that play against me?

Visual goal setting is a relatively new business concept used by organizations such as Nike, Starbucks and Microsoft. The program was developed by keynote speaker/visual artist/comedic performer Patti Dobrowolski. After completing an MA in Psychology, she quickly realized the value in drawing out goals as a visual reminder of how to fuel motivation and increase performance. A regular TedX speaker, her *Snapshot of the Big Picture* focuses on employees and leaders within an organization, drawing out all aspects of their business: what challenges they face, what direction they want to take, what goals they are trying to achieve and, ultimately where they envision themselves to be.

Using Nike as an example, their vision "to bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world" is a very clear and concise statement. Founder Bill Bowerman believed that "if you have a body then you are an athlete". Nike has far surpassed their main rival adidas on many levels, even though the latter has almost a 15 year

head start in the athletic apparels world.

In an attempt to catch up to the "Just Do It" mentality, adidas redefined their strategic vision in 2013: "The adidas Group strives to be the global leader in the sporting goods industry with brands built on a passion for sports and a sporting lifestyle. We are committed to continuously strengthening our brands and products to improve our competitive position". Unfortunately it just doesn't have the same zing as Nike's vision.

According to Dobrowolski, it was Nike's ability to draw out their direction on paper that made the difference in rallying their shareholders to come up with a concise objective that was easy for all levels to comprehend and mobilize.

The housewares industry is facing some major challenges ahead. Manufacturers want to become retailers instead of innovators, brick and mortar retailers are searching for new ways to engage e-commerce driven consumers, e-commerce retailers are searching for ways to better serve their customers through personalized service, millennial consumers are looking to attach themselves to heritage brands with a proven track record, the list goes on. Our current economy is far more complex than the good old days of just supply and demand.

Success is a team effort. By illustrating a clear company objective, the better poised your team will be to execute your goals on your behalf. Spearheading a clear company vision will lead to a happier, healthier and more productive working environment which should translate as the best possible experience for all. 🐾

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# A place for everything and everything in its place

With an organized mind and an eye for cool products, Brad Rothblott has created a calming, clutter-free retail oasis in Toronto's trendy Bloor West Village

By Laurie O'Halloran

**B**rad Rothblott tends to be fanatical about keeping things organized. He's not afraid to admit he's a bit of a control freak, in fact it's one of the key reasons he's been successful as a retailer. One look around his clean, orderly store, **BINZ**, and you can see this is a man who pays attention to details.

Born and raised in Toronto, Brad displayed a creative, methodical side early on. His mother was 49 when he was born – his sister is 17 years older and his



Brad Rothblott, above, opened his second BINZ store in Bloor West Village in 2013.





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## Retail Profile: BINZ

brother is 22 years older – so his nephew quickly became more like a sibling. He also became his first business partner. As a teenager, he ran a very lucrative car detailing business during the summers, earning Brad a good income while tapping into his entrepreneurial spirit. The Rothblott family also ran a successful scrap metal company in Toronto and all the children were raised to appreciate the value of hard work. (In fact, the

company will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2017.)

After studying marketing, Brad wasn't really interested in joining a big corporation so he went to work for the family business in 1988. He hated the job, which involved driving around picking up scrap metal from local factories. Then one day his father suggested he open a retail outlet in a corner of their warehouse as a distraction.

Brad was thrilled. He quickly gathered some of the more valuable items (ladders, hardware, tools, etc.) and set up a small display at the front of the building. He taped up a handmade sign offering the items for \$5 each. People stopped and shopped and soon bought up everything he had for sale. Brad very quickly decided buying and selling merchandise was a lot more fun than collecting scrap metal.

Together with his nephew, he soon opened a larger 'retail shop' in the warehouse. They would go around the city buying end of lines, overstocks and surplus inventory from other wholesalers and retailers for 10 cents on the dollar. He'd sell it for 20 or 30 cents, made a good margin, and fell in love with retail.

The store grew until it started to take over the entire floor. Brad's father was not amused. And although Brad loved selling to customers, he didn't particularly like selling hardware products.

He started to look at different product categories where he "didn't need a lot of knowledge to appreciate them". The only items he really enjoyed selling at the store were containers, including empty paint cans, jars and bottles. With his hyper-organized brain, he was drawn to sleek, simple design and wanted to open a store selling just containers.

He left the hardware store in 1997 and worked as a wholesaler, selling to other retailers and operating out of his Toronto home. But he didn't enjoy the solitude so in 1999, when a friend told him about a 500-square-foot retail store in the Beaches area that was up for lease, he jumped at it. He decided to call it **BINZ – The Container Store** but soon heard from Garrett Boone, CEO of The Container Store in the U.S., who told him they owned the trademark.

Brad simply shortened the name to **BINZ**, and today he is glad he did. Like the store, the name is simple and clean and reflects the type of products he sells.

Once he signed the lease, Brad went to IKEA to purchase shelving for the store and got a small business VISA card, which he used to finance the entire inventory for the opening. Though he



The 1,700-square-foot store carries about 3,500 neatly organized SKUs. The vinyl strip flooring has a distressed wood texture in a dark colour to contrast with white shelving.





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## Retail Profile: BINZ



focused on containers, he also knew he had to offer complementary lines so he approached companies like Umbra and InterDesign and added laundry baskets and waste cans.

Without any advertising at all, **BINZ** was an instant hit with customers. Brad sold \$600 the first day, but the trouble was it seriously depleted his inventory. It was going to take two weeks for a re-order to arrive, so he decided to drive to another store in north Toronto where he filled a couple of shopping carts with housewares products that he put up on the shelves. Although he wasn't making much money, he wanted to keep the shelves full and by the time his new stock order arrived, he knew he had a winning retail concept on his hands.

"Customers loved it because the products are fun and practical and useful," he says. "They are also affordable, which provides great value. We offer quality, price, design and function and that's what consumers want."

Everything in **BINZ** is displayed in a neat and very orderly fashion because Brad wouldn't have it any other way. Even in his own home kitchen, the cans in his pantry are lined up just like a grocery store shelf. Yet the approach works with the type of products he sells, and many of his customers comment on the 'calm' feeling they get when they walk into **BINZ**.

Initially, Brad started with a single employee and an old cash register. He

worked seven days a week, did all the orders manually and faxed them into suppliers. It worked and, mostly through word of mouth, the business continued to grow, becoming a favourite with local families.

In 2001, the retail shop next store closed down. Brad leased the adjoining space, cutting a hole through the wall and adding 500 square feet more space to his operation. It allowed him to add more bulky housewares items. That same year, he installed a Point of Sale system that enhanced efficiency and inventory control.

During those early years, Brad learned to adapt quickly. If he didn't sell an item in three weeks, he started to clear it out before month end.

"I don't sit with dead inventory," he explains. "In retail, it will kill you."

**BINZ** continued to thrive in the



The cash desk features a stone wall backdrop in muted grey and beige tones.

Beaches for 14 years, which Brad thinks may be a record! But sadly, as condo developers started buying up neighborhood retail properties, the 'vibe' changed. And with fewer retailers, foot traffic dropped by about 30%. When people started shopping elsewhere, Brad started looking for a new location in the west end of Toronto.

Brad had always loved Bloor West Village because it has the same neighborhood dynamic as the Beaches but had never found a suitable space to rent. Luckily, he found a perfect spot in 2013 and quickly opened a larger, second **BINZ** location. It offered 1,700 square feet on the main floor, plus space for offices on the second floor, storage in the basement and a back door for loading.

The new store was also an immediate success with local customers, and a year later Brad closed his Beaches operation.

Like the first one, the new store is always neat as a pin and clutter-free. It carries an expanded offering of back to school items, small appliances, beverageware, and novelty items, plus a full range of kitchen and bath products and, of course, home storage and containers.

Today, the store employs six people, including Cindy Parisi, formerly with another popular kitchen store, who joined **BINZ** as manager.

"I loved Brad's concept as soon as I saw it," says Cindy. "All the employees and customers have such a great relationship with him. We are like one big



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Brad says he would open another store tomorrow if he could find another manager as good as Cindy Parisi, shown right.



family. I feel that I am valued and respected and that my opinion matters. He encourages us to make our good better and our better best.”

Cindy adds that Brad’s ability to source products that are functional and fun is what brings a smile to their customer’s faces, especially kids. She likes to tell the story of one family that went on vacation to Disney World. On the last day of the trip, the kids were allowed to pick anything they wanted from the gift store. Instead, they told their mother they’d rather wait until they got home to Toronto and shop at **BINZ**.

Another customer once told Brad that **BINZ** is ‘what Canadian Tire is for men, but for women’, which is the ultimate compliment for someone who spent his youth browsing their automotive aisles.

Providing an in-store experience that shoppers love is key for Brad and finding the coolest products is part of that experience – his favourite part. Over the years he has developed a love of art and architecture. He appreciates curves and clean lines that are seamless and smooth. With an intense dislike of ‘clutter’, he only buys items that have a purpose and rejects anything that ‘sits on a table and looks cute’. It has to offer value, design, quality and practicality.

“What’s exciting for me is finding that next hot item,” he says. “I search other stores, I visit trade shows and I follow trends to find items that speak to me. Once I find that winning product, I start my search for the next one. When a new product arrives in our store, every-

one is happy and that positive energy reflects back into the store. The customers pick up on it.”

Brad has always had an exceptional ability to see potential where others don’t. For example, one of his best sellers has been a tiny clear plastic jar. Most people see a useless little jar, but Brad saw a cool and practical product that you can’t necessarily find everywhere. Another best seller has been the red, white and blue rubber ball that is so familiar to baby boomers. He has sold thousands over the years because his customers remember it from their childhood and can’t resist.

Divorced with two sons aged 14 and 20, Brad has been devoted to both his business and his children most of the past two decades. He likes to stay hands-on and has established very close working relationships with most of his suppliers.

Anji Levy at Groupe SEB has worked closely with Brad for years. She says his passion and drive can be seen throughout the store. “He has a great eye for detail that makes his store stand out from others in the neighborhood.”

Sales rep Elaine Woodward at Inter-Design says **BINZ** is one of her favourite stores, and Brad is one of her favourite customers because he loves to work closely with his suppliers. “He has his finger on the pulse of the latest trends,” she says. “He is incredibly organized and creative enough to make his store successful in a very challenging retail environment.”

She adds that **BINZ** is the only store where she never walks out without buying something – and after 28 years in the business that’s saying something.

While Brad knows his customers and his inventory intimately – and has created a unique merchandising concept – his need for control makes it difficult to let someone else take the reins. One look at the store and you can see how easy it would be to franchise the concept across the country, but Brad would have to know that every store was being run precisely the way he wanted every minute of the day.

“For me it’s a human resource issue,” he explains. “You can’t grow unless you have people you trust to run it the way you want.” He adds, however, that if he had another Cindy, he’d open a new store tomorrow!

Growing his presence on social media, including Facebook and Instagram, is part of the future plan. Brad has hired someone to handle the web side of his business and hopes to eventually start selling online. It’s a big step for a self-described “bricks and mortar guy”.

Brad visits a lot of stores every year but he says he’s never seen another one quite like his own. That’s because he tends to see things from a different perspective. And although he’s never been great at finding good people to help grow the company, he’s very good at finding cool, unique products that nobody else offers.

Products are easy, but as Brad points out, the cost of running a retail business is not. It’s one of the biggest challenges facing independents in high traffic urban areas where the cost of rent can be prohibitive. “Sometimes it’s hard to stay passionate when so much of your profit goes directly to pay your overhead.”

Even so, 20 years after opening his first store in his father’s warehouse, Brad still loves retail just as much today. For a well organized neat freak, running a store devoted to storage and organizational products is as good as it gets. “I’m very fortunate,” he admits. “Not everyone is lucky enough to do what they love for a living.” 🐾

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# The house of Lords

By making a difference in the lives of their customers, Lords, a popular U.K. home store in Notting Hill, has been recognized as one of the best shops in the world

By Michele Hespe

Upon meeting the founding sisters of Lords – Rachna Dewan and Rita Dewan – there is an immediate sense of warmth, support and comradery. The pair, who are (respectively) director of product and brand director, are two parts of an incredibly successful equation, and they both have great respect for what the other strives for to make their business work as a whole.

“Both of our roles are so different, and that’s what makes it work,” says Rachna. “I am in control of choosing and ordering our products, and Rita looks after all customer facing touch points, the look of the stores and our brand.”

Lords’ Builders Merchants was established over 25 years ago, as a small company that provided things such as kettles and other goods to builders, and then it grew more into a housewares retailer. The Dewan sisters launched an online offering called Lords of Notting Hill in 2010. Today there are six stores, and the company name has been changed to simply Lords.

This year, after being

chosen as the best home and housewares retailer in the U.K. to represent the country at the IHA Global Innovation Awards, and then being chosen as one of the five best retailers in the world, the brand has become more renowned, but it will never lose the thing that makes it so special – its personal, locally focused approach.

It was an organic growth for Lords, and the decision to open a physical store was based upon the sisters finding the store of their dreams as an empty shop. They knew from the moment they saw

the location in Notting Hill that it was the right place to grow Lords and step beyond the realm of online retail.

“It’s all about location for our stores,” Rita explains. “We want to be a local go-to store that fits right in with the neighborhood and community. We choose high-street locations, and the brand is firmly dedicated to being a local business for local customers providing an exemplary level of service.”

From starting out with just the two of them, and some help from family and friends, the business now employs 50 staff. “It’s been quite a rapid growth, but

we’ve risen to the occasion, and all of the stores are doing well,” says Rachna. “Winning the IHA *gia* award was confirmation that we are headed in the right direction, but we were so shocked when Lords was announced as one of five global honorees. It’s a David and Goliath situation really – there are so many big, suc-





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The goal of Lords, located in the trendy Notting Hill neighborhood, is to provide people with all their household needs and aspirations. Visual merchandising in-store and in the window, right, is designed to captivate the consumer and take them on a journey through the different rooms of their home.



successful retail stores in the world, and we are small in comparison, so it was an incredible feeling to be recognized in such a competitive environment."

The sisters treasure their staff, and they were the first people they called to let them know of their win. "We are always so grateful to our team. Each of our managers is the entrepreneur behind their own store. They make us a success, and they are the most important thing in the business. And if our staff are loving their job, smiling and having a fun time, then our customers feel that and have a great experience."

Lords only employs people with a passion for customer service who are local to the area, with an understanding of the local customer. "We need them to have the ability to answer questions such as: 'Where is the nearest gym?', 'What are the good restaurants in this area?'"

They also tend to have a passion to suggest and promote local causes," says Rita with pride. "We use a competency-based interview process to ensure that we employ the right people and that they will be happy within our culture. New employees then 'buddy up' with more experienced staff to learn, and are

therefore comfortable answering questions."

The sisters go the extra mile to keep their staff happy. They send their managers and trainee managers to the Oxford Summer School (the leading UK retail training organization) for a week's residential course, offer interest-free loans to employees, long-service recognition awards, rewards for recommending new employees, and even have a counselling service for employees.

This all ties in beautifully with their 'At Home With Quality' mantra, and their aim to remain a sophisticated, thoughtful housewares retailer with a passion for quality and service.

"Our aim is to serve our local communities, providing people with all of their home needs and aspirations, and we also aim to revive the local high streets where we set up our stores," says Rachna. "If someone's iron breaks or they need a light bulb, we want them to think – I can go to Lords, rather than head to a big department store. And our offering is supported by an online presence with an extensive range reaching far beyond that available in our stores, so our customers don't need to look any further than us."

The *gia* jury and expert judges chose Lords as a global honoree for many reasons, but something that really stood out was the brand's dedication to storytelling found in displays, merchandising and marketing materials.

"Our visual merchandising takes the customer on a journey, through the different rooms of their home. Items are





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clearly zoned and each product is given the same thought and attention, ensuring it is well presented. Every product is important – from a basic cleaning product to a piece of cookware.

Ambience is pivotal to the success of Lords. Music is chosen to suit the time of day, clever lighting enhances products, and scented candles are chosen to create another sensory story. Importantly, local photography in store provides a local connection. It all comes together to create a warm and inviting environment. “There is also no cramming of goods – everything must breathe and feel important,” says Rita.

Marketing is taken very seriously at Lords, and also has that personal touch. Mail-outs are sent to thousands of potential customers, with vouchers delivered as welcome gifts for new customers. Social Media – Facebook, Twit-

ter, Instagram – is used to advertise in-store events, new ranges, news updates and initiatives such as the support of a local charity. E-Newsletters are sent out to the growing database, advertising in-store events, and providing suggestions for gifts at Christmas and what kitchen gadgets make cooking easier. Follow-up letters are then sent out to customers thanking them for their business.

“We also make sure we are directly involved in social media campaigns with local networks, retailer associations and schools,” explains Rita. “For example, there is our involvement in a mothers’ website where we share hints and tips on products suitable for making children’s meals and offer readers inspiring recipes.”

Participation in local fairs, school activities, and the sponsorship of local events means that Lords really is im-

mersed in the communities where they are based. “We support local charities when we can,” says Rachna. “For example, all takings on the last day of sale before we refurbished our Hampstead store were donated to a local church restoration fund, and we recently sponsored a community opera held on behalf of a local charity looking after troubled teenagers.”

This kind of heartfelt participation in the community and the special extra touches are what keep customers coming back to Lords. “We are more than just a store,” says Rachna. “We want to make a difference to people’s lives,” adds Rita.

For information about the *gia* program, contact Piritta Törrö at [piritta.torro@inspiredconnection.fi](mailto:piritta.torro@inspiredconnection.fi). Additional information on the *gia* program is also available online at [www.housewares.org/show/gia-retail](http://www.housewares.org/show/gia-retail).



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# Bottoms Up!

*What's new in barware and wine accessories*



Finding an attractive way to present a hostess with a bottle has never been easier. The Vinstrip from **Canitra Agents** is made in Italy of leatherette and provides a great alternative to the paper bottle gift bag. It's reusable and comes in three colours, including gold, above.



**Cuisinart's** new line of Waring-branded wine accessories combines stainless steel styling with precision craftsmanship. Crafted to mix the proper amount of air into wine at just the right pace, the Waring wine aerator, above, enhances drinking pleasure without the wait of the typical decanting process. It comes complete with

base and stand. The powerful automatic corkscrew, below, opens up to 50 bottles on a single charge. Compact and cordless, it comes with rechargeable battery, charging base and foil cutter. The wine preserver (not shown) is the perfect way to remove air from wine bottles. It includes 2 wine stoppers with date indicators, NiMH battery pack and rechargeable base unit.



The Lucaris Tokyo Temptation collection has been developed to provide timeless stemware designs that have the durability to meet the rigors of daily use. Available from **Cuisivin**, the stemware is made of high quality lead and barium free crystal that is hardened with Titanium to make them highly break resistant. The sleek glasses feature a precise laser cut fine rim, extra thin bowl and seamless pulled stem.



Gefu's Vinoso Prosecco/Wine opener, left, has an integrated dual blade foil cutter. It also handles dried, extra long or plastic corks with an easy one turn operation. Developed in partnership with Sommelier Martin Kupfer and winemaker Jean Buscher, it features a Teflon-coated, extra long screw. The Sparky Gefu Champagne sealer, right, features an airtight seal for champagne and prosecco and easy one step operation. Available from **David Shaw**, this attractive stainless steel stopper is also dishwasher-safe.



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Drip tray is kept cool so fat does not burn.

# Bottoms Up!



**Trudeau** has unveiled a beautiful new Bar and Wine Collection designed to elevate the entertaining experience. Made with high quality material, the look and feel of the new collection is sleek and urban, with minimalist details and a black chrome finish. The company worked alongside sommeliers and wine industry specialists to create an assortment that would meet the current needs of Canadian consumers. Shown above is the Wing corkscrew that stands upright, and the tapered acacia wood muddler.

The Peugeot whisky glass is designed to reveal the subtleties and aromas of spirits such as Cognac, Armagnac and Rum. The metal chilling base brings the whiskies to the perfect temperature in a couple of minutes. Available from **PSP North America**.



The Iron Age line from **Abbott**, above, includes bottle openers in a variety of creative designs. The company also offers clear shot glasses shaped like a revolver, a cowboy boot or a skull, below.



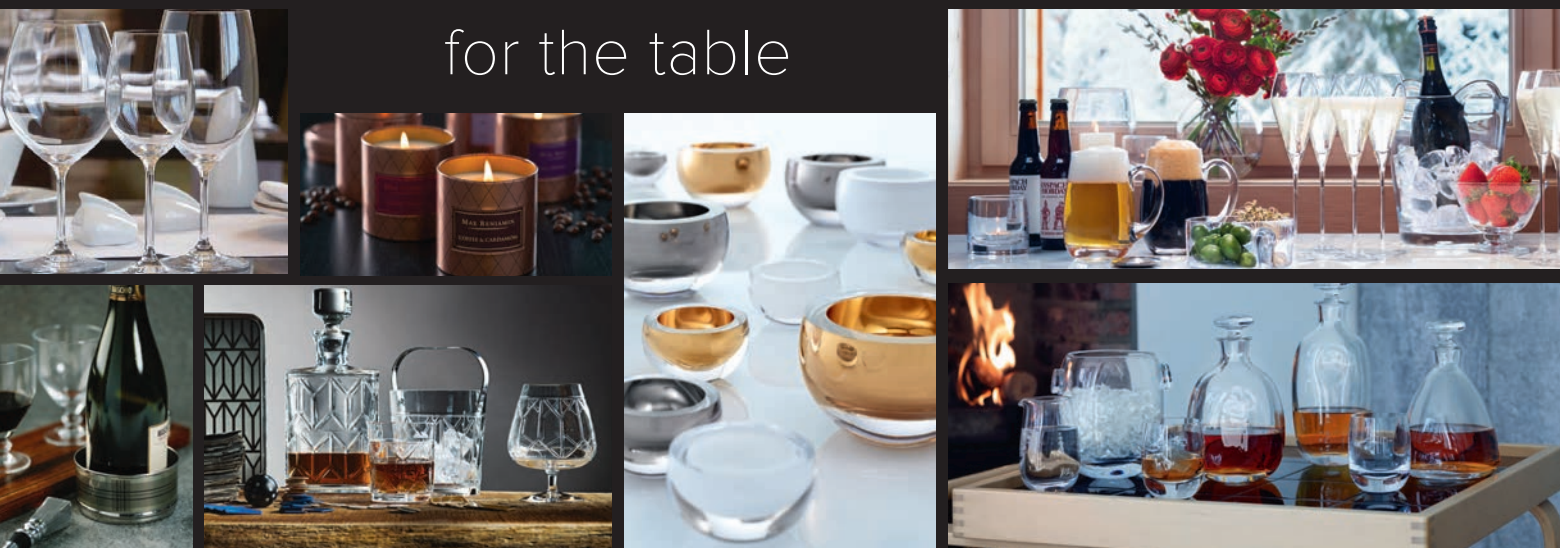
**Jogi's Imports** is the Canadian distributor of the original "World's Best" line of tea and hand towels. Made in Poland, these durable towels are perfect for the kitchen or the bar. They're made of 100% cotton that is super-absorbent and lint-free. Soft on glassware, the towels are made without harmful dyes. Only 100% eco-conscious materials are used in their production. Offered in a variety of colours, alone or in sets.







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# Bottoms Up!



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

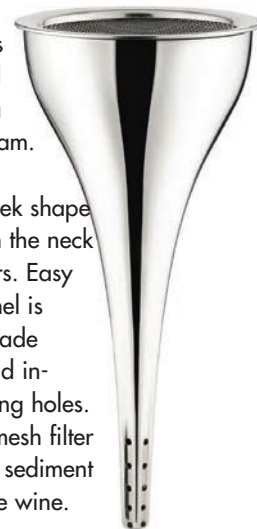


**InterContinental Mercantile** has introduced a brand new collection of coloured Picardie tempered glasses, shown above. The 250ml glasses are available in four colours. There are also three new additions to the Tossware line of shatterproof beverage ware, including a champagne flute, shown right. Made of BPA-free recycled polymar, the glasses are stackable for easy storage.



The Pro-Measure dual chamber bottle pourer from **Product Specialties** precisely measures and pours shots quickly and easily. Simply return the bottle to upright position and the second shot is ready to pour. The leak-proof silicone seal fits most bottles. Made of BPA-free food grade plastic.

The elegant Nuance stainless steel wine funnel is designed by a Scandinavian team. Available from **Swissmar**, its sleek shape fits comfortably in the neck of most decanters. Easy to clean the funnel is made of high grade stainless steel and includes 30 aerating holes. The removable mesh filter prevents cork or sediment from entering the wine.



PicnicTime caters to beer lovers with a range of products, above. The two-tiered acacia tray comes with four 4-ounce beer glasses, a chalkboard panel, soapstone pencil and hollowed area to hold beer caps. The Growler Tote is insulated with an adjustable shoulder strap and (empty) 64-ounce glass beer growler. Also offered is a solid acacia boxed set of two tall 12-ounce glasses with cork coasters and bottle opener. Distributed by **Don Schacter + Associates**.

The Barwise line from Joseph Joseph includes a one-pull waiter's friend, an easy-action winding corkscrew, a cap-collection bottle opener and an Any-Way magnetic bottle opener. Distributed by **DanESCO**, the range offer intuitive ease of use.



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# Coffee Add-Ons

Your customers can warm up to a seasonal favourite with Balzac's Winter Blend, a Marble Roast coffee with a rich and harmonious balance of sweet plum and dark chocolate notes. This Certified Fair Trade Organic premium holiday blend, available from **On Route Distribution**, comes in six 12oz freshly roasted bags – red bow included.



From **Le Creuset's** Café Collection, this set includes six mugs made of premium stoneware with a protective finish that resist chipping and fading. Offered in a rainbow of colours, the interior enamel prevents staining. The 3.5-ounce capacity makes them perfect for espresso.



The Gefu Lorenzo coffee grinder from **David Shaw**, left, has an adjustable ceramic mechanism with 11 different settings. The container holds four cups and has a detachable handle that stores on its side. The Brazil CrushGrind grinder, below, is at a perfect ergonomic angle for grinding. The high tech ceramic grinder has low thermal expansion for a uniform grind. It provides a very high output for professional results.



**DanESCO** carries a wide range of espresso cups and saucers and coffee mugs. Shown below are the Natur Mugs from BIA International. These simply formed mugs are offered in soft, natural shades. They're packaged for gift-giving in sets of four.



The Coffee Roller from **Product Specialties** lets consumers experience uniformly mixed coffee. Rolling the ceramic ball in the cup continuously mixes ingredients and prevents them from settling on the bottom. The handle provides a secure grip and prevents spills while the outward curve of the glass shape prevents the ball from rolling out while sipping.



When exposed to the air, ground coffee quickly loses its flavor and aroma. A pump simply removes the air from the VacuVin Vacuum Coffee Saver creating a vacuum, so that flavor and aroma of the coffee will be kept in perfect condition. It holds over a pound of coffee and the smoked exterior protects the coffee from the harmful effects of light. Perfect for saving foods such as cookies, cereals, chips, and nuts, the larger pump is designed to pull air out faster. It's also dishwasher-safe. Available from **International Innovation**.

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# Bamboo Basics

*What's new in bamboo serving boards and kitchen tools*



Created with the company's patented Gripper base, these bamboo cutting boards by Architec feature a light, natural, consistent grain. The non-slip rubber feet have been injected into the wood using a patented heat pressure process. Offered in three sizes by **Jascor Housewares**. Also from Jascor, Mark McEwan by Fresco furred bamboo boards, shown below, are uniquely made from one solid piece of natural bamboo without glue lines. They're available in four formats; medium carving board, bread board, medium utility board and 2-pack cutting board set.



Durable and beautiful, **Cuisinart's** new line of bamboo cutting boards are scratch and moisture-resistant. Each is gracefully crafted with easy-grip silicone edges. Some models have a drip groove to collect juices and prevent spills. Responsibly sourced, the boards are hand-washable with warm water and a mild detergent.



Your customers can serve in style with **Counseltron's** lovely bamboo tray. This durable tray is good for all occasions and is environmentally friendly. It's rich honey colour, which makes it distinctive, elegant and subtle material for fine serving or entertaining. Bamboo is lightweight, yet 16% harder than maple and 50% stronger than red oak. It's resistant to moisture, stains and mildew.



The Joyce Chen assortment of mini burnished bamboo tools are available in this handy countertop display unit. Oven roasted to a golden brown colour, they are dishwasher-safe and ideal for non-stick surfaces. Available from **David Shaw**.

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\*Saeco Avanti App is compatible with iOS devices running iOS 7 or higher; iPad 3rd generation or newer; iPad mini with Retina Display or newer; iPhone 4S or newer. It is compatible with Android devices with a minimum screen size of 7 inches with Bluetooth 4.0 running Android OS 4.3 or higher. Tested devices include Samsung Galaxy S3, S4 mini, Tab 3 & 4, Nexus 5 & 7, and Sony Experia Z.

# Garment Care



The **Conair** Extreme Steam handheld steamer features dual heat technology for faster, hotter, finer steam. The ready light is on after a 40 second heat up. It has two heat settings: a normal setting of 140°F and a Turbo setting of 160°F. Dry steam penetrates heavier fabrics yet is still safe on delicate fabrics. The aluminum sole plate glides easily on fabrics. The 1550-watt steamer features a built-in creaser head and 7.3-ounce water reservoir. It's safe to use on clothing, drapes, furniture or mattresses. Steaming also helps remove odours and helps kill dust mites.

The OXO FurLifter combines the effectiveness of a traditional lint brush with the convenience of a self-cleaning base. There are no refills required. Quick and easy to use, the FurLifter is available from **DanESCO** in three sizes to fit any lifestyle. Designed with pet owners in mind.



The award-winning Flint lint roller from Danesco is retractable and refillable. The compact, durable body fits in a car, purse or pocket.



This bicycle wall hook from **Abbott** is perfect for the laundry room wall. The cast iron hook comes in antique red. A sea-horse hook in antique blue is also offered.



The **Rowenta** Everlast Anticalc, left, is the perfect tool for professional-level ironing results. The high performance steam iron has a removable anti-calc collector that traps limescale and calcium particles and easily removes them. It features a stainless steel 400 microsteam soleplate for perfect steam distribution, a precision tip, and an auto-steam feature that continually adjusts steam output to the temperature of the soleplate.

Rowenta's X-Cel Steam handheld steamer, right, produces wrinkle-free clothing for great efficiency. Features include start-up time of only 45 seconds, 1500 watts of power, strong steam output that sanitizes and refreshes as it steams and a lock position for continuous steam. The large metal head is ideal for garment care on a daily basis.





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# Store & Contain



The versatile design of the Stack recycling separation system from Joseph Joseph, above, combines all boxes and bags into one slim, modular unit. The food waste caddy fits neatly on top. Available from [Danesco](#), it's sold as a two-piece set, with one stack unit and the food waste caddy.

Made in New Zealand, the [Sistema](#) storage range, below, comes in a variety of sizes for the garage, laundry, bedroom or bathroom and the range of accessories allows consumers to customize their storage containers. The containers are robust and built to withstand heavy use. Ideal for the North American climate, they can handle temperatures from -20 to +110 degrees Celsius. With a unique cubing system, they easily stack and store. The patented clips are hinged for quick access without removing the lid.



The Italian-made "Athens" rolling cart with top tray by Metaltex is ideal for the kitchen or bathroom. Available from [Counseltron](#), the rolling cart comes with four baskets and a shelf on top. The smooth rolling wheels allow for easy movement and scratch free floors.

The new Tada line from [Jascor Housewares](#) includes this handy counter stand, above, with two rust-resistant aluminum shelves. Below, this aluminum corner stand features a silicone base to keep it in place.



[Abbott](#) is introducing this rustic three-tray shelf that can stand on the floor, or on the counter. It's made of galvanized metal.





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## IHA reveals top retail trends for 2017

As the global economy becomes reinvigorated, North America has emerged as one of the strongest markets for 'housewares' in the world. According to recent estimates, the U.S. and Canada accounted for 25.7% of global housewares retail sales totaling US\$331.1 billion. Total global sales were up 2.6% in 2014.

The International Housewares Association recently released the following market trends and opportunities for exporters looking to reach U.S. retailers.

### Living Online

Consumers continued to move online as virtual retailers regularly turn in double digit growth reports. In the past year Amazon has begun to deliver something it said was not particularly important up to now – profit. Although CEO Jeff Bezos admitted that someday something will eventually disrupt Amazon, 2017 will not be that year.

Other online retailers such as Wayfair are thriving. Walmart has snapped up Jet.com. Virtually every brick and mortar retailer has a full blown online strategy whether driven by acquisition or home grown. Online grocery shopping may finally be maturing and all sorts of shopping and delivery options are being launched or tested: click and collect, curbside pickup, drone delivery, one-hour delivery, same day delivery.

Even more clearly than before, all of these tools put the consumer in charge. Thus the retailers that make it the easiest for them appear to be thriving.

### Curation and Value

The bricks and mortar retailers that continue to drive store visits seem to have one of two strategies (and occasionally both) that make them attractive. One is offering unique products in a unique environment that helps the consumer by pre-selecting just the right assortment.

The other strategy is value. With Aldi expanding in the U.S., Lidl about to get started, and dollar stores back in good shape, everyday value retailing appears to be a regular driver of success.

Whether it's everyday low pricing or a blizzard of promotions, the consumer has been educated to expect a deal and refuses to pay full price.

### Membership

There is hardly a retailer left in the U.S. who does not have a loyalty program. According to *Business Insider*, "between 2008 and 2012, U.S. loyalty memberships increased by 10% per year – reaching over 23 memberships per household." That has not slowed since 2012.

The consumer has not yet tired of joining these programs and their impact still seems strong. Many tie specific product purchases to increased member rewards.

### Smart Home

Smart home products and platforms are appearing daily and are projected to grow dramatically in the next few years. In its latest IOS10 update, Apple has launched its Home app into what is already a busy space of home controlled devices.

Add to the products the growth of voice activated control systems and the future of the home is certain to bring surprising new products and services to make our lives simpler. Who would have predicted 10 years ago that we'd be ordering a brand by pressing a button or view who is standing at our front door from anywhere in the world?

### Engaging the Consumer

Entertainment continues to be a key aspect of retail success. Independent retailers do it with cooking schools and hands-on events. Bloggers and YouTubers do it with interesting approaches to the home.

On *The Inspired Home* (www.theinspiredhome.com), a service of IHA and the housewares show, thousands of consumers learn to prepare meals and treats, keep their homes cleaned and organized and learn about the latest in Smart Home technologies, all driven by products displayed at the March show.

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# Barb's Kitchen Centre celebrates 30 years!

Family, friends, customers and staff had plenty to celebrate this fall as Barb's Kitchen Centre in Edmonton marked 30 years in business with a series of three open houses. The festivities featured food, fun, demonstrations and super product specials.

Owner Barb Lockert and her husband, Tim, opened the gourmet retail store – formerly called Bosch Kitchen Centre – in March of 1986. From the start, the products have revolved around one theme: save time, save money and retain nutrition. Initially the store focused on Bosch kitchen machines, flour mills, dehydrators, juicers and Kuhn Rikon pressure cookers.

Today, Barb offers a wide range of key housewares brands, a bridal registry, knife sharpening clinics and regular cooking classes for adults and children. She's appeared on a variety of TV pro-

grams and is the coordinator of an annual culinary tour of Europe for her loyal customers. (She's currently planning a culinary tour of Sicily in 2017 and has just returned from a tour of Germany.)

In addition to seasonal items such as cherry pitters, food strainers, food mills and fruit cake supplies, Barb directly imports hand-made ceramics from Italy and Spain, hand-blown glassware from France and stainless steel "Alligators" from Sweden (an onion chopper that she claims is one of the best.)

When asked what the secret is to her success, Barb modestly explains it's because "we have stocked our store with quality small appliances and hard-to-find items that customers appreciate. Customers need these food prep products in order to have a positive experience in the kitchen, whether or not they



like to cook, and whether they are a novice or experienced chef."

It helps that Barb pays attention to details and knows most of her customers by name - especially after her culinary tours. This personal touch gives the store a level of comfort not found in most retail establishments.

Barb has regularly reinvested in the business over the years and purchases in volume in order to save freight costs. Although they carry tens of thousands of SKUs, if they don't stock a particular item, the staff are happy to place a special order. Seasonal items are often available throughout the year and other local retailers occasionally call to see if they have a certain product. As well, even though she is a single independent retailer, Barb has no qualms about importing products directly. They also ship to countries around the world and offer a warranty on every product in store.

The store's well-trained staff have extensive product knowledge and are always available to answer customer's questions. They are also comfortable using the products they sell, especially with regular evening classes demonstrating proper cooking techniques.

"The first 30 years have flown by very quickly," says Barb. "We look forward to continuing to serve our customers for many more years to come."

Right: Shown with Barb (far right) are staffers Patty Green, left, Maria Fisher and Gerry Stefaniuk, who has been with the store for almost 30 years. Below, Bill Marshall of Zwilling, left, Debra Buchan of Peugeot, Barb Lockert and Bob Buchan of Peugeot. Both Bob and Bill have called on Barb for three decades.



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