

HomeStyle

Canada's Housewares Magazine

October 2020

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Laure O'Halloran

Publisher & Owner, Home Style Magazine



What makes a great meal?

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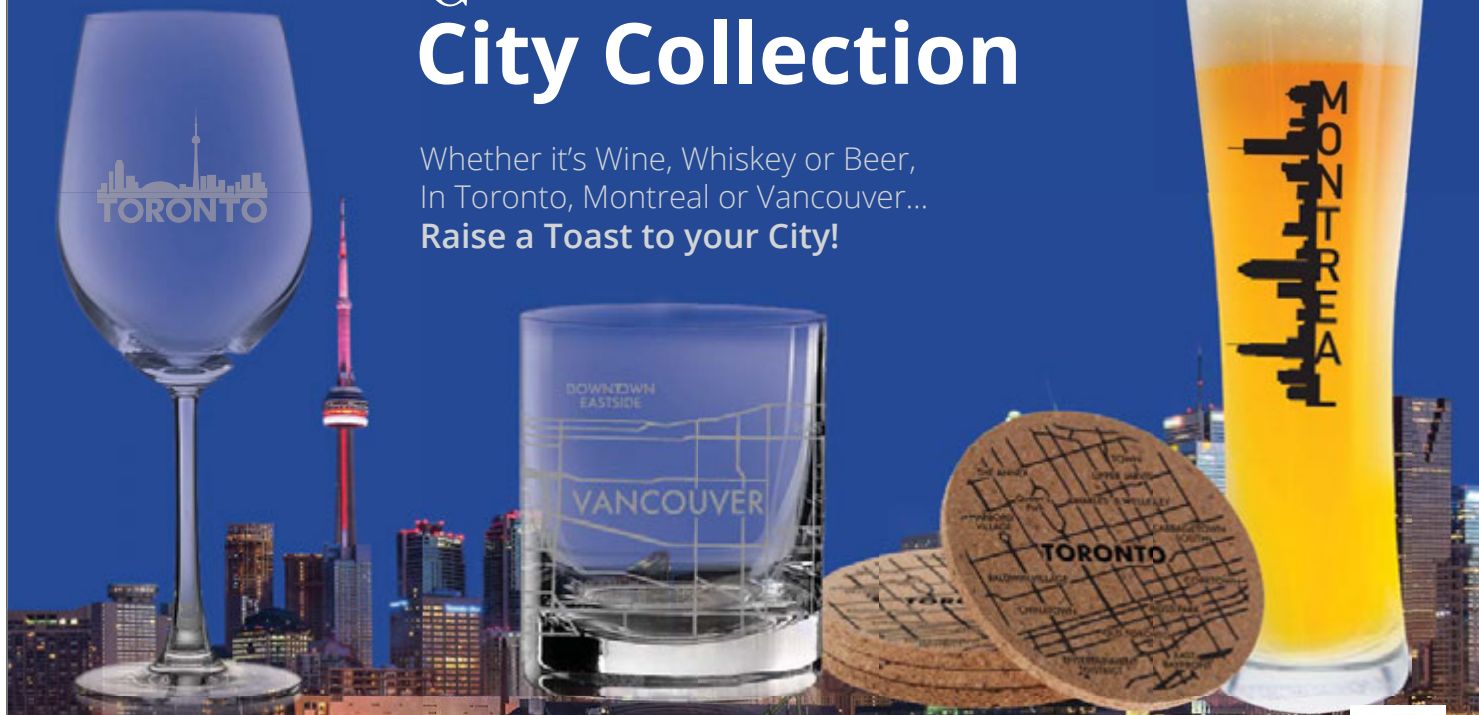
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Hamilton Beach Canada thanks Laurie for her years of dedication and contributions to our industry. Through the pages of Home Style she has provided us with a way to share and stay connected. We wish her a wonderful retirement!

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It's time for me to turn the page

As the owner of this magazine, I can assure you that every editorial I have ever written has come from the heart, but none more than this one. That's because it will be my last as editor of *Home Style*.

After three decades at the helm of this publication, and 40 years as an editor, I've decided to retire. It was a very emotional, very difficult decision because, quite frankly, I have been blessed with the absolute best job possible.

It all began in 1985 at the annual KRW awards dinner at the Donalda Club in Toronto. I was working at Southam as the editor of a dental magazine. That evening, I was seated next to Don Flynn, the owner of Centre Publications. He had just sold his company to Southam, and it included a brand new magazine called *Housewares Canada*.

I soon learned he was looking for a new housewares editor. The next day, we had lunch and he offered me the job. I was intrigued by the potential for this new magazine and, as much as I loved the shiny world of orthodontics and those graphic photos of periodontal disease, writing about kitchen products seemed like a refreshing change. Besides, I would get to work in a great new location near my home – a huge corner office with two windows that opened! (As a smoker at the time, this was very important.)

I took the job, and I took to this industry immediately. Those were the early days of The Shopping Channel and Consumers Distributing was king, The Food Network was just getting off the ground, and I was determined to make a go of *Housewares Canada*. But it was a struggle, revenues were low, so I took on the additional role as editor of *Centre*, the hardware magazine.

Even after we moved to Southam's head office in 1988, housewares sales were still below expectations. At the time I was dating Michael O'Halloran, publisher of *Canadian Architect* and one of the top ad sales reps at Southam. I no-

ticed he worked fewer hours than I did, yet made more money. It was infuriating but enlightening, so I decided I had to try my hand at ad sales.

I asked my group publisher if I could give up *Centre* and take over advertising sales on *Housewares Canada* as well as editorial duties. In those days it was unheard of for an editor to venture into the 'dark side' of advertising sales. But I was young and naive and had the confidence only youth can provide. Fortunately, my boss Herschel Fenik believed in me and gave me a chance.

Well, it wasn't as easy as I thought, but I'm a quick learner and a hard worker and it helped that I really believed in my product. Within two years, *Housewares Canada* was making a small profit and I was working virtually alone, with no employees and very little contact with my peers. That's when it hit me: "If I am already doing this all by myself, why don't I do it all for myself?"

I went home, discussed it with Mike and he, as always, supported my decision – even though we had just bought a new home. Where would we get the money? I decided to turn to my family.

On a warm July evening in 1989, with great trepidation, I approached my parents, Diana and Rick Gaiger, and asked if I could please take out a loan on their home in order to fund my new magazine. Without any hesitation, they agreed on the spot. I love them so much for their faith and trust in me.

By September, I was off and running and I've never looked back. I like to think I didn't find the housewares industry, it found me. This is where I was meant to be. My destiny. How else could I have made so many mistakes in those early years and still survived?

In January of 1990, *Home Style* hit the streets with 50 pages of advertising and far too many typos! My goal was to focus on the people behind the products, to tell the back stories and celebrate the buyers and retailers who were making a difference. My mom was my



biggest cheerleader, working at our show booth in Toronto and travelling with me to trade fairs around the world from Las Vegas to Paris and Hong Kong.

Southam was not happy, naturally, and they came after me hard with their best editor on *Housewares Canada*, Elena Opasini. She and I were friendly but it's difficult to compete with a company owner. I was tenacious and took everything personally. (I'm embarrassed to admit I often cried when an advertiser turned me down.) Poor Elena didn't know what hit her. After two years, she gave up, *Housewares Canada* folded and I had the whole market to myself again.

Luckily, *Home Style* was quickly adopted by the housewares community. I learned a lot interviewing key buyers, and I adored profiling independent retailers. By telling their stories, I felt I could unite buyers and sellers domestically and also be the voice of our industry on a global stage. I was honest and straightforward with advertisers and worked hard to earn their trust. (They were also my best source of industry gossip!) I'm proud to say that several of the companies who advertised with me in 1990 are still with me today.

It sure wasn't easy in those days before desktop publishing. Laying out waxed galley columns on a drafting table in my living room, using a fax machine for proofs. But it was worth it. I will never forget those advertisers who agreed to jump on board in the begin-



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Editor's Notes

ning, who took me under their wing and then allowed me to fly. Most have become lifelong friends.

In 1991 Mike and I were married and he joined the company full-time as partner, taking over most of the advertising and all of the financial side. This left me more time to get involved in the trade shows and chair industry events such as Canada Night. Slowly, in addition to reporting on the industry, I also became a part of it and, as a compulsive organizer, I took my role seriously.

The next year our son, Jesse arrived, and Mike generously stayed back to care for him as I travelled the world. He also supported my ill-fated decision to launch a national trade show in 1997 which, although financially successful, turned me into an emotional wreck. I decided to stick with publishing.

In 1998, our daughter Haley was born. We've always worked from home so both kids have always known how important *Home Style* was in our household. Those were the glory years for the magazine and we thrived. Sadly, Mike and I split in 2016 but we remain friends and I know that without his invaluable support and input as a partner, I never would have had this perfect career.

Publishing this magazine is as good as it gets and I never imagined I would want to give it up. But then, late last year, my little brother died suddenly. It broke my heart. As my only sibling, we were extremely close and his death was so painful, it just took the wind out of my sails. It changed me, and then the pandemic changed everything.

After turning 60 in May, I started to

consider retirement for the first time ever. After three decades of believing I would publish *Home Style* forever, I felt like I needed to step back and take some time to reflect. My brother was a funny, fascinating character who enriched my life in so many ways. I want to honour him by writing a book about his life.

The truth is, I'm just an old-fashioned print magazine editor who built her career on solid relationships and a passion for housewares. I love communicating with my readers but I'm not comfortable in this digital world. I hate Twitter, I don't have an Instagram account and I avoid Zoom calls at all costs. I would prefer to exit in print form while I'm still relevant.

It will be nice to see what life is like without a constant, 8-week deadline. But I sure will miss the personal interaction. One of the great rewards of my position has been the ability to connect people who may never have met otherwise. Many lifelong friendships have been created at events like Canada Night, after-hour trade show dinners and parties at my home.

This magazine has never been "a job". It was something I lived every day. It was a part of me and, whether they liked or not, a part of my family's life. I wouldn't change a thing.

Home Style Magazine has been a joyous, exhilarating journey. I am indebted to every person who made it possible for me to prosper as a publisher and give back to an industry that has given so very much to me.

– Laurie O'Halloran



My parents, Rick and Diana Gaiger, left, who financed the launch, and co-founder Michael O'Halloran, at *Home Style's* 15th anniversary cruise in Toronto in 2005.





Congratulations

Happy Retirement Laurie

Wishing you all the best in this next chapter of your life!

With love, your friends at




My mother, the housewares queen

By Haley O'Halloran

As early as I can remember, my mom was always in her home office working on the magazine. She would get up every morning at 6 a.m., have two coffees, and start writing. Two days after giving birth to my brother, Jesse, she came home from the hospital and, with him still in her arms, took a call from an advertiser.

While this may seem to paint the portrait of a workaholic, as a child I truly looked up to my mom and her career success. It wasn't about making money for her. She told me every day how lucky she was to have a job she loved in an industry full of people she adored.

Not only was she a writer who actually made money from it, she also owned a company, got to travel the world, and knew the best brands in kitchen products. Does it get any cooler than that?

My mother was such a role model to me growing up that one day, while she was on a business trip, seven-year-old me wrote and designed my own issue of *Home Style Magazine* with construction paper and pencil crayons. Unfortunately, it never got published.

When I was 15, my mom decided she needed a secondary proofreader. Because of my love for the magazine and literature, along with my English grades, I was given an issue of *Home Style* and asked to find the mistakes. The rest, as they say, is history, but it's a telling anecdote of how much I admired her hard work and how much she trusted me.

In my time as a proofreader, I've made a lot of corrections and made a few mistakes myself. I've also been able to travel to several trade shows. Having dinner

with Cathy Steele in New York City a few years ago was definitely a highlight. (She generously offered us Broadway tickets to a brand new musical called *Hamilton*. Instead, my mom insisted on taking me to see *Wicked* even though she had seen it twice. Now *that* was a mistake I wish I had corrected!)

I've grown up surrounded by the phenomenal people in the housewares industry and I've loved working for *Home Style* for the past few years. Not only is the job fun to me, but I've had the pleasure of editing for talented writers like Candace Sutcliffe, Jane Zatylny and Denise Gaze.

I have to say, the one thing that has stayed the most consistent after 31 rewarding years is my mom's love for the industry – and the people who keep it alive. Not a day goes by where she doesn't mention a lovely note she received regarding an editorial, or how she had the pleasure of catching up with an old friend, or how there's a new product or retail store that she's excited about.

The decision to retire wasn't easy for her, believe me. The excitement about retiring has been balanced out with a healthy dose of tears after reading dozens of emails from people who will miss *Home Style* – and the woman behind it.

My mom is a woman of many talents, and I know there will never be a dull moment during her retirement. Although you predominantly know her as an editor, she's also a marvellous chef, dancer, artist, writer, world traveller, karaoke enthusiast, gift-giver, party hostess, and lover of life. If there is an adventure, she will find it.

Home Style was simply one chapter in my mom's life, and just because she's flipping the page doesn't mean the book



has ended. She will always hold the housewares industry in her heart, and she will always be a phone call away for anyone she has befriended over the years. Through her I have felt every one of the industry's losses, triumphs, devastations, and shining moments.

The housewares industry will never find another Laurie O'Halloran, and I could never wish for a more inspiring role model. Godspeed, mom. I can't wait to see what the future holds for you.

Haley O'Halloran recently graduated with honours from the Film and English program at York University. (haleyohalloran13@gmail.com)



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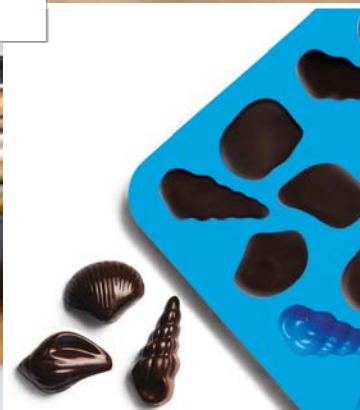
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Roger Smith retires after 40 years in industry

The first time I met Roger Smith, he wasn't himself. In fact, he was Santa Claus! It was during a special "Christmas in June" new product event that Black & Decker was hosting for the media and Roger played the role of a jolly old man perfectly. I wasn't surprised to learn, over the years, that his personality was actually very similar. Kind and easy-going with a wonderful sense of humour, he built his career on integrity and honesty. Like Santa, Roger genuinely was a jolly person. Always ready with a joke or a compliment, he was also an excellent speaker and emcee.

Roger began his career with Rubbermaid in 1979 and after mastering the art of selling, moved to Black & Decker where he became known as "the kettle kid". After a brief stint at Cantel in 1995, he joined Sunbeam in 1998 as director of sales and then moved to Salton Inc. in 2002. He spent six years there developing brands such as George Foreman.



For the past 12 years, he has been a partner and driving force with United Sales and Marketing, headed by his long time best friend Paul Pogor. Roger always led with his heart and his love for the housewares industry was reflected in his dedication as treasurer of Canada Night since 2008. His commitment to both his vendors and his customers helped create lifelong friendships and left a lasting impression.

Roger officially retired in July and spent the summer at his cottage 'Rog Lodge' on Kashe Lake. We wish him many years of happiness and good health with his wife Darlene and their three beautiful daughters.

- Portmeirion Group has acquired Royal Selangor Canada's 50% interest in Portmeirion Canada, which makes it a wholly-owned subsidiary of Portmeirion Group, ending its 33-year partnership with Royal Selangor.

The move was part of its strategy to build a significant presence in Canada. Royal Selangor will continue as the Canadian and U.S. distributor for Royal Selangor pewter products and Portmeirion Canada will continue to operate from its current office and warehouse and retain the combined workforce.

The company also announced that **Robert Burke** is stepping down from his executive role as Portmeirion Canada's president, having served since the Canadian business was founded. He will remain as a non-executive director on the board of Portmeirion Canada.

At the same time, **CY Wong** is stepping down as senior vice president but will continue to act in a senior management role, reporting to Bill Robedee, newly appointed president, North America, Portmeirion Group.

- Home Hardware Stores has appointed several new directors in its merchandise department to support strategic growth and focus on customer-centric category management. **Tara Spengen** has more than 25 years in retail experience at ACI Brands, Korhani Home, Walmart Canada and Hudson's Bay. She succeeds Brian Straus as director, merchandise hardlines. **Carol Crystal's** nearly 20 years of retail experience includes time with Lowe's Canada, Walmart Canada and HBC. She is taking over the position of director, merchandise hardlines, which was previously held by Dave Martin. **Craig Thompson**, who was most recently with Walmart Canada, is now director, merchandise hardlines, succeeding Rob Szekszer. **Meriyem Kaf** will fill the newly created role of director, merchandise strategy and execution. She brings 15 years of experience at Walmart Canada, Sobeys and AC Nielsen. Spengen, Crystal and Thompson will report to Rob Szekszer, VP, merchandise for hardlines while Kaf will report to Marianne Thompson, senior VP, merchandise.

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Dear Laurie,

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Each edition brought us the news and the stories that fuelled our
determination to succeed and our desire to support our extraordinary local retailers.

Thank you for infusing HomeStyle with your wonderful human values
and contagious enthusiasm. You've made a difference.

It's been an honour and a pleasure. We will miss you.

Your friends at Danesco.



David's Tea pivots to virtual sales

Gourmet loose leaf tea purveyor , David's Tea is making a transition to on-line sales that will mean the permanent closure of the majority of its brick-and-mortar stores.

The Montreal-based retailer, with 240 locations across Canada and the U.S., was hit hard by the pandemic. But while in-person sales diminished amid forced closures, David's saw massive e-commerce growth, inspiring the restructuring. The plan will include a significant reduction in its footprint of physical stores while it will continue to operate its online business through its e-commerce platform at www.davidstea.com and its wholesale distribution channel.

The post COVID-19 retail environment has created significant challenges for the chain's in-store customer experience. As a result, they had to accelerate the transition of the retail business away from brick-and-mortar.

Letters

I just received my copy of the July issue and your editorial gave me chills. It speaks directly to the heart of the amazing survivors in the retail businesses as well as all of us who are human.

Beautifully written!

Linda Rosati

Marketing Manager, Danesco

I was sitting here in my office, reading the latest issue of *Home Style* and decided to reach out and say thank you. Thank you for publishing so many inspiring stories from our industry. I love hearing how many retailers have adapted to the challenging situation to survive, both personally and in their business lives. We are all facing new and unique challenges but these stories remind me of why I love this industry and the people in it.

Thank you again for the great stories you publish and for helping our industry stay connected.

Mark Adkison, Vice President, IHA

The company has yet to confirm how many of its shops will be closing but has said that its pivot to virtual will include access to "tea experts" and other features that made its in-store experience special. David's Tea products will continue to be available in grocery stores. It has filed for creditor protection in Canada and plans to do the same in the U.S. under the country's Bankruptcy Code.

Sales soar at home improvement stores

Being housebound during COVID-19 has prompted most consumers to rethink their environment and many are choosing to renovate. That has helped boost profits during the last quarter for both Lowe's and Home Depot chains.

Lowe's exceeded estimates for its Q2 sales and profits as same-store sales rose by 34.2%, compared to forecasts of an increase of just 13.2%. Net sales grew by 30.1% to \$27.3 billion.

Home Depot's sales soared by 23% in Q2, with same-store sales logging their biggest increase in at least 20 years. The retailer's net income grew by 24.5% to \$4.33 billion, or \$4.02 per share, even with a \$480 million investment in pandemic-related benefits for employees.

PEI ban keeps plastic bags out of landfills

One year after Prince Edward Island became the first province to ban single-use plastic bags, the Island has managed to keep millions of them from entering its waste management system. Since the summer of 2019, businesses have been prohibited from offering single-use plastic bags at the checkout.

Before the ban, the Island saw between 15 and 16 million plastic bags collected by Island Waste Management Corporation every year.

Although the single-use plastic bags are recyclable, it had been increasingly difficult for IWMC to find any recycling market for the bags. They had been used as fuel for heating and cooling some public buildings in Charlottetown.

The Plastic Bag Reduction Act requires retailers to charge a minimum of 15 cents for replacement bags, often paper or reusable plastic.

Marquee Brands buys Sur La Table

Marquee Brands has signed a definitive purchase agreement to acquire the Sur La Table brand and all related intellectual property. The acquisition will further build upon the company's home and culinary portfolio and offer unique product opportunities for its Martha Stewart and Emeril Lagasse brands.

This is the 12th brand in Marquee's portfolio, increasing its reach to nearly \$3 billion in annual retail equivalent sales, according to the company. Marquee Brands is owned by investor funds managed by Neuberger Berman.

In July, Sur La Table filed voluntary petitions under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code in the United States.

Michael DeVirgilio, president of Marquee Brands, says, "We are selective and careful to only add brands to our portfolio that serve a real purpose, bring joy into the lives of our customers, and help them celebrate life's special moments. In partnering with industry leaders like CSC Generation, Sur La Table will offer customers a seamless omnichannel shopping experience guided by knowledgeable staff, technology, and one-of-a-kind offerings."

Women find it hard to get back on track

A recent survey by Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) reveals that more than a third (37%) of women-owned businesses will find it difficult to resume operations during and following the COVID-19 pandemic. This is almost 15% more than their male counterparts. In response, Retail Council of Canada, Shopify and BDC have teamed up to help women retail entrepreneurs get their businesses online. The initiative was kicked-off with a webinar on September 2, 2020.



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Consumers not eager to return to old ways

The pandemic has created a number of changes in the way consumers shop and what they deem important. But new research suggests that consumers may not be so eager to rush back to the way things were, even if it were safe to do so.

In a new report by Momentum that polled 1600 people in eight markets, only 16% of respondents said they would immediately go back to stores and public spaces if the pandemic were to end right away. Furthermore, 64% believe stores will change for the better once it's over.

In terms of specific habits, 61% of consumers plan to do more cooking at home and 60% plan to eat healthier, habits they've picked up during the pandemic. In addition, 43% say they plan to visit fewer bars, concerts, movies and sporting events, with 40% planning to visit restaurants less.

Consumers still miss some parts of the

way things used to be. Leading the pack were the 75% who miss fashion stores, followed by 74% who miss grocery stores, 66% who miss home goods stores and 61% who miss electronics stores.

But the shopping experience is what customers miss more than anything, more so than particular retailers. This is especially true for the social elements of shopping: 83% miss the chance to spend more time with friends and family, while 79% miss being able to handle products and 77% miss casually browsing.

Shoppers don't trust businesses are safe

As Canadians begin to resume more and more of their day-to-day lives, a new Ipsos poll shows consumer trust in the ability of businesses to keep them safe from COVID-19 is low. According to a study, one in five Canadians don't trust any industry for their cleanliness

and safety protocols. With a wide variance in regulations across the country, including from one municipality to the next, the challenge for businesses to meet customer and employee expectations for safety measures, and communicate these appropriately, is immense.

IKEA goes green

IKEA Canada has been named one of Canada's Greenest Employers by Mediacorp Canada for the 12th consecutive year. The company, which has just launched a "Year of Sustainability", has phased out single-use plastics and committed to 100 percent zero-emission home delivery by 2025.

Each of IKEA's country CEOs have taken on the additional role of chief sustainability officer. "We are transforming our business to be climate positive and fully circular by 2030," says Melissa Barbosa, country sustainability manager.

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Vendors In The News

Condiment suppliers are retooling

Almost overnight last spring, a consumer-driven economy with clearly delineated work and home spending, changed profoundly. Rising demand for certain items, as well as global supply-chain disruptions, has driven up prices.

Canadians and Americans are now paying significantly more than they did a year ago for coffee, eggs, sliced ham, ketchup and cheese, according to a recent Reuters analysis.

As ketchup, mayonnaise and vinegar sales surged, Kraft Heinz diverted resources to running these productions around the clock while suspending others. And the tens of millions of commuters who used to grab a cup of coffee on their way to work are now making it at home. As such, coffee producers are replacing the 20-pound bags they used to sell to restaurants and coffee shops with smaller sizes for home use.

Wet-dry vac maker closes up Shop

Shop-Vac is going out of business. The maker of the famous wet-dry vacuum has facilities in Pennsylvania, New York and China. Three U.S. facilities, including the head office, will close in the coming weeks, putting more than 400 out of work.

Shop-Vac's Canadian distribution centre is in Burlington, Ontario. In Canada, where Shop-Vac is estimated to own the lion's share of the wet-dry vac market, retailers reported that their fill rates had dropped off dramatically over the past couple of months, according to a report in Hardlines. Shipments are being made on a C.O.D. basis only until inventory runs out. Other companies, including King Canada and Trademark Tools, as well as Emerson and Cleva, a home products maker in Greenville, S.C., that makes a wet-dry vac under the Vac-master name, are reportedly looking for ways to fill the void.

Shop-Vac was a family-owned business that started in 1953.

OXO gives back to environment

As it celebrates its 30th anniversary, Oxo, a division of Helen of Troy, has joined 1% for the Planet, committing to donate 1% of its annual sales toward environmental causes. The "1% for the Planet" campaign champions environmental awareness and action, enabling brands to give back by supporting a global network of nonprofits that drive true change.

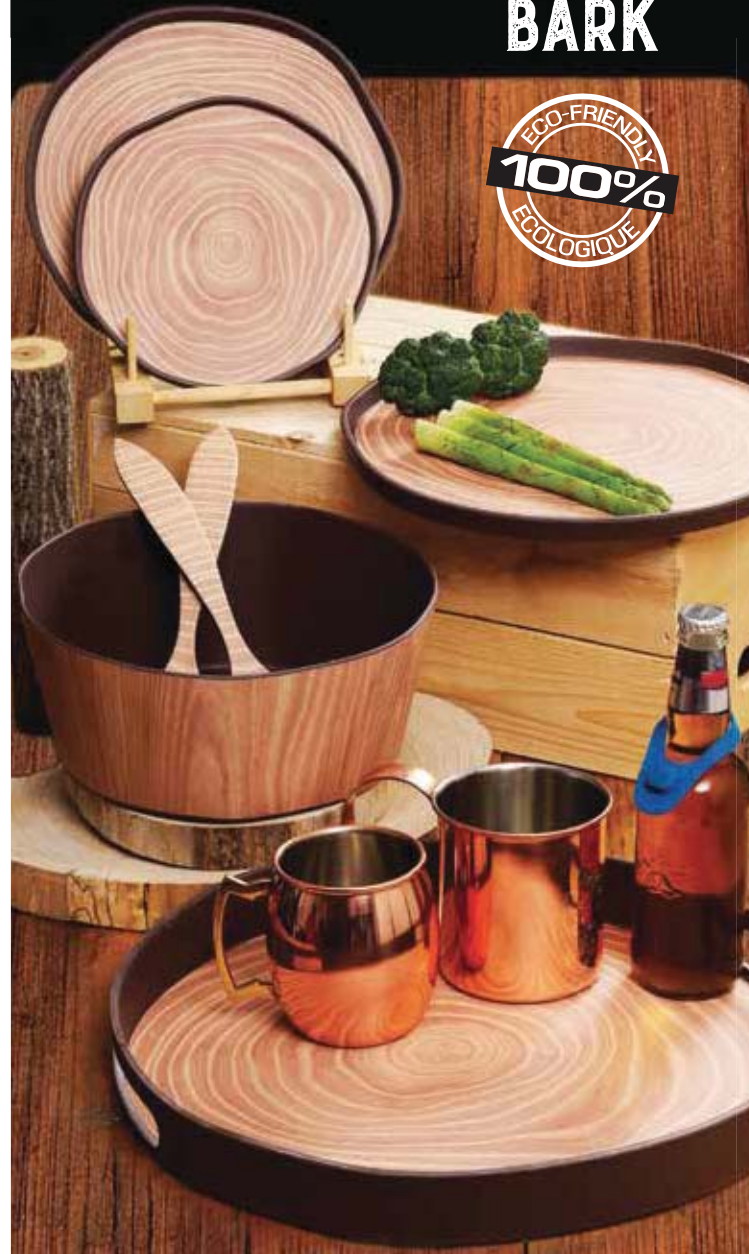
As Oxo begins its support of 1% for the Planet, it will donate money, time and resources to a select group of organizations that promote better, more sustainable food and agriculture practices; address environmental issues affecting air, land and water; and invest in education to empower future generations. In Canada, Oxo products are distributed by Danesco.

Prior to the pandemic, Canadians saved just 2 to 3% of their disposable income. That jumped to 28.2% in the second quarter of this year.

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Home Hardware celebrates top dealers

Home Hardware Stores has recognized Chemong Home Hardware Building Centre with the annual *Walter J. Hachborn Store of the Year Award*. The accolade is part of the Home Hardware *Proud of My Home Achievement Awards and Celebration*, held during the company's 2020 Virtual Fall Market in September. It was presented to Terry Jenkins, Randy Kingdon, Mike Kingdon and Fred Sweeting, dealer-owners of the Selwyn, Ontario, store. The store also took the category of *Best Home Hardware Building Centre Over 15,000 Square Feet*. Other honourees include Parry Sound Home Hardware (*Best Home Hardware Store Over 6,000 Square Feet*) and Ryan Buck of Buck's Home Building Centre in Nova Scotia (*Best Young Retailer*).

Kim Kardashian puts her name on the table

In late August, Kim Kardashian West's corporation, *Kimsaprincess*, filed for the KKW Home trademark for goods and services including gifts, general consumer merchandise, bath and shower products and accessories, bedroom furnishings and accessories, and home furnishings and accessories.

In 2019, the company reserved the KKW and Psalm West trademarks — the latter the name of one of Kardashian West's four children — for a variety of products, ranging from countertop appliances to home furnishings, home accessories, linens, kitchenware, cookware and dinnerware.

The environment also suffers from the virus

From an environment standpoint, it seems a world already in tumult has run headlong into the coronavirus pandemic. Now single-use plastics are more popular than ever as people panic-buy disposable items like water bottles, plus other products wrapped safely in the confines of plastic, like hand sanitizer, masks and tissues. Then, of course, peo-

ple scrub everything with sanitizing wipes, also packaged in single-use plastic containers.

In addition, the restaurants where we used to eat food off plates using metal utensils now provides a to-go bag full of individually wrapped dishes. And most restaurant bags are not recycled.

Even if the industry could handle this crush of "recyclables," and even if it were economically feasible to process all the stuff, many recyclers have shut down in response to the pandemic. Curbside recycling programs have been suspended by many local governments, especially in the U.S. It's a recipe for environmental disaster.

Canadians are wasting more food

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the average Canadian household wasted a little more than two kilograms of food a week. But a new self-reporting survey suggests Canadians may be wasting more food during the pandemic.

Survey respondents estimated their household generated about 2.03 kg per week of organic food waste before the pandemic. Now, the survey suggests the average Canadian household generates 2.30 kg, an increase of 13.5%.

In total, Canadian households have generated 20 to 24 million kg of additional organic waste a month since the start of the pandemic. But we're bringing more food into our homes so it only makes sense we waste a little more.

Empire invests big in order to expand

Empire Company plans to spend \$2.1 billion over the next three years building and renovating stores, expanding its e-commerce offering and growing its private label portfolio as it drives to add \$500 million in annualized earnings.

The Nova-Scotia-based grocery chain (parent of Sobey's) will use some of the money to add about 20 new Farm Boy locations in Ontario and convert between 30 and 35 conventional stores in

Western Canada to FreshCo.

The targeted \$500 million increase in yearly EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) will come from increasing its market share and building on its cost and margin discipline. (The financial target does not include impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic.)

The strategic plan, dubbed Project Horizon, is a follow-up to its previous three-year plan that achieved more than its savings target of \$550 million.

Conran left his mark on the design world

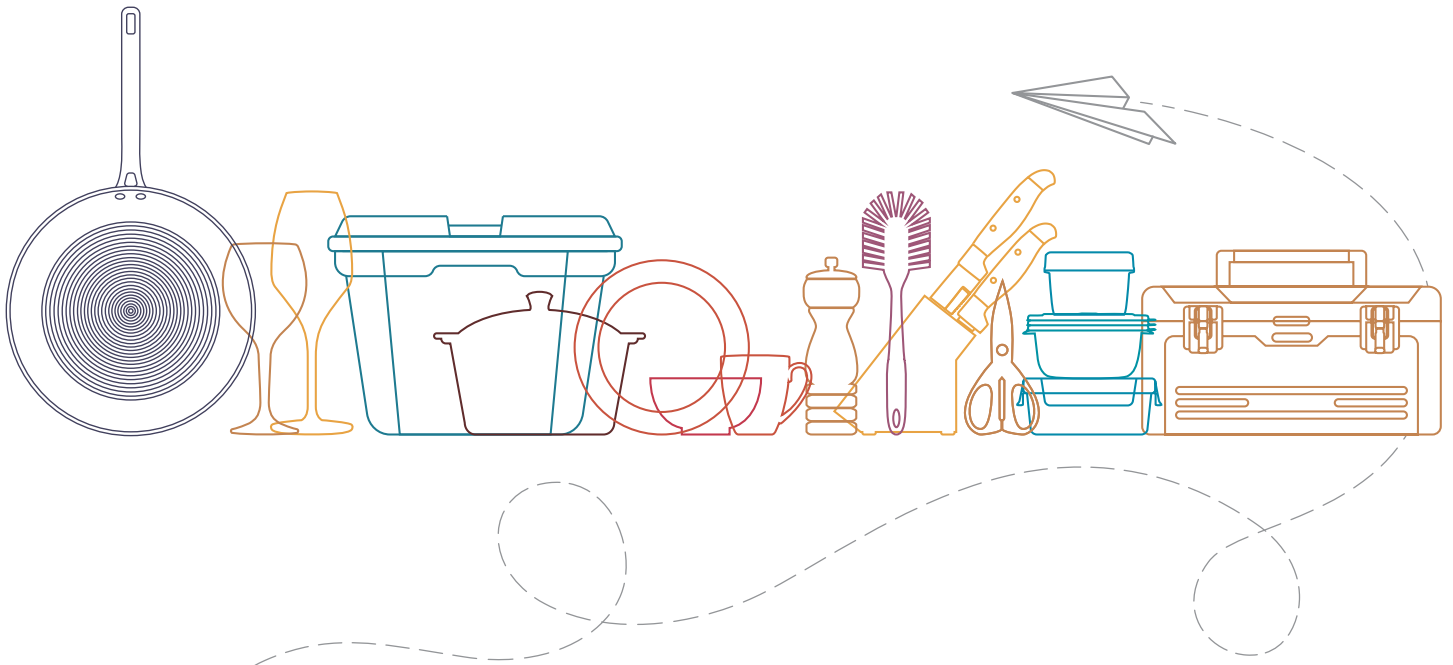
Sir Terence Conran, the English designer, restaurateur, retailers and writer, passed away on September 12th. Conran was born in 1931 in England. After studying textile design at London's Central School of Art, he started his own design practice in 1956.

In 1964, he opened the first Habitat shop in Britain with his third wife Caroline Herbert. It grew into a large chain selling household goods and furniture in contemporary designs.

In the 1980s, Conran expanded Habitat into a group of companies but in 1990 he lost control of the company. His later retail ventures included the Conran Shop and Benchmark Furniture.

Conran's architecture and design practice also worked on projects in North America and Asia. In 2009, he licensed the Conran Shop to a partner in Japan. In 2014, Cassina IXC acquired the entire business of The Conran Shop in Japan where it still thrives with four stores. In 2019, the Conran Shop opened in Seoul, South Korea.

Nearly half of the country's online households (47%) now have an Amazon Prime membership, up more than 10 percentage points from 36% in May 2019. Nearly two-thirds of households headed by millennials have Amazon Prime, as do more than half of families with children.



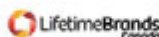
Thank You
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For her longstanding contribution to Home Style magazine
and the Canadian Housewares industry,
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health, happiness and success in her future endeavours.

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New Chicago show dates coincide with Toronto Gift Market

The International Association has announced that its annual trade fair, The Inspired Home Show, will be held in-person August 7 to 10, 2021 at McCormick Place Convention Center in Chicago. The event had previously been scheduled for March 13 to 16.

“As the pandemic continued into the summer, we had many conversations with our board of directors, exhibitors and retail buyers, all of whom were experiencing apprehension about the ability to safely convene the industry as soon as March of 2021,” explains Derek

Miller, IHA president (shown right).

“While the show continues to be a critical part of their businesses, the health and safety of our industry is our first priority and moving the event to later in the year allows more time for authorities to successfully manage this crisis.”

Although the decision to postpone the show until August of 2021 has been met with universal support from IHA members in the U.S., Canadian retailers and vendors are quite upset because the Chicago show now falls on the same dates at the August Toronto Gift Market.

Many companies exhibit in both events and are worried their customers will be forced to miss one of the two shows.

Derek Miller responded to their concerns by saying: Since April, the International Housewares Association has been exploring various options as contingencies in order to ensure the show would be held in 2021. As the COVID situation is ongoing, and especially after the summer resurgence in the U.S. and in other countries, IHA received feedback with concern from retailers and exhibitors about the March timing. To collect additional information, IHA sent a survey to buyers, and the overall sentiment was that travel to trade events in the first quarter of 2021 was not likely while travel in the third quarter was very likely.

“When exploring other dates later in the year, there are only three venue options possible due to the size of The Inspired Home Show – Chicago, Orlando and Las Vegas. To further complicate matters, there needs to be 15 total days from the time IHA takes control of the venue through move-out. As such, IHA needed to find an open window within the venue of one of these three cities that is one-half a month long, and the only time available was August 7 to 10 at McCormick Place.

“The decision wasn’t directed at the Canadian Gift Association or the Toronto Gift Market in any manner. It was simply the only time slot available to move The Inspired Home Show to later timing.

Regarding the 2022 show, Miller said IHA will survey exhibitors and buyers in the coming weeks to collect current and relevant buying pattern data to determine appropriate timing for future shows.



Atlanta show celebrates major milestones

The first major market during the COVID-19 crisis – Summer 2020 Atlanta Market – saw serious buying, a safe shopping environment and a collective goal of working towards recovery reports International Markets Centers. Held August 13 to 18, the market took place in 950 AmericasMart Atlanta showrooms with manufacturers, importers and representative groups showcasing 4,000+ lines. Despite major changes to its format due to the crisis, Atlanta Market marked milestones in IMC’s Atlanta NEXT transformation of the AmericasMart campus including the opening of new product destinations and relocated showrooms plus the completion of the first phase of the update of the Building 1 lobby.

“To say that the Summer 2020 Atlanta Market was a market like none other is an understatement,” says Bob Maricich, IMC CEO. “While the format was changed, the impact on the retail and design community was the same. Atlanta Market brought buyers and sellers together to make connections and do business – which are key elements in their success as they recover from the COVID-19 crisis.”

The COVID-19 crisis impacted attendance throughout the week with IMC reporting 20% of the usual buyer traffic and 23% of the number of businesses (stores and designers) represented. The market drew a largely regional crowd with 90% of the traffic from the Southeast and 82% from Georgia and its five surrounding states.

IMC plans to return to the market schedule as previously announced for Winter 2021. Showrooms will be open Tuesday, January 12 to Tuesday, January 19, 2021.

NY Now to launch digital market platform

NY Now plans to launch a digital market platform this fall. The NY Now Digital Market will open on October 3rd with five “live” show days.

According to show organizers, the digital market will unite NY Now’s community of retailers, brands and makers for live events, experiences, connection, reactivation, and holiday buying. It will remain open as an always-on interactive platform and lead generation tool for buyers and brands to connect and do business.

Retailers can expect enhanced search capabilities across product categories, communities, and trends; best-in-class digital functionality including video calls, appointment setting; and a machine learning layer that curates personalized brand recommendations specific to their buying needs.

Emerald Exhibitions has announced that NY Now Winter 2021 will be a hybrid in-person and digital event. The Digital Market Live Show days will take place from Thursday, February 4 to Friday to February 12, 2021. The in-person event at the Javits Center is scheduled for Sunday, February 7 to Wednesday, February 10, 2021.

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Frankfurt reschedules Ambiente trade fair

As a result of the pandemic, Messe Frankfurt will not be holding any physical trade fairs at the Frankfurt exhibition grounds between January and March 2021. The company is revamping its spring trade fair calendar to focus on new digital offerings and will move Ambiente to April 17 to 20, 2021.

From April 17 to 20, 2021, the Ambiente, Christmasworld and Paperworld shows will be making a once-only appearance as a joint event in Frankfurt: the International Consumer Goods Show Special Edition. The physical event will be actively supplemented with digital offerings as part of Consumer Goods Digital Days, which will also be home to the purely digital Creativeworld, an event that is taking a one-year hiatus.

The company has already organized 13 large trade fairs at various locations in China since the crisis began. However, now that it is not only governments tightening travel restrictions, but also companies, the latest pandemic developments are causing growing uncertainty amongst trade fair customers.

Wolfgang Marzin, president of Messe Frankfurt, says, "It is important for our customers that we make a decision at an early date, as it would otherwise be time for them to begin investing in their trade fair presentations."

GC conference to be held at Dallas market

GC Buying Group will hold its 2021 Start the Year Member Conference and Vendor Showcase January 6 to 7 at Dallas Market Center during the Dallas Total Home & Gift Market, set for January 6 to 12.

The annual GC conference draws retailers from across the country to review new products from vendors, network among peers and experience presentations from business and industry experts. This year's Start the Year Conference in January welcomed 200 independent retailers and 145 vendors.



Showroom-only event a success in Las Vegas

Adaptations to the Summer 2020 Las Vegas Market – later summer dates with a showroom-only format and virtual events – proved successful as exhibitors reported strong buying at the market which ran from August 30 to September 3. The market presented 1,300+ resources to predominately regional buyers sourcing new products for design projects, replenishing needed merchandise and preparing for vital fourth quarter selling.

"Although Las Vegas Market was unlike any we've ever experienced, we were able to manage and meet buyer and supplier expectations," says Bob Maricich, IMC CEO. "From arrival to exit, we delivered a safe and business-focused buying opportunity that best supported market needs during this uncertain time."

IMC reported that 20% of the usual summer market buyer attendance was represented, with designers making up a notable 28% of marketgoers. Las Vegas Market attendees were predominantly regional with 77% coming from the Western United States. In total, Las Vegas drew attendance from 44 U.S. states with California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona and Texas rounding out the top five.

For a safer market experience, Las Vegas Market suspended in-person events and rolled out a lineup of 25+ virtual pre-market webinars addressing a range of topics that included business practices during COVID-19, current market trends, diversity and inclusion, product discovery during market and retail best practices.

The Expo at World Market Center, a 315,000-square-foot exposition facility on the World Market Center Las Vegas campus, opened during the summer 2020 market. Originally slated to hold the market's temporary exhibits, the Expo was used for registration and health screenings. A grand opening of the Expo is planned for Winter 2021 Las Vegas Market when it will host the return of temporary exhibits.

Fall Hardware Show will be a virtual market

The National Hardware Show has announced its 2020 edition will take place virtually October 12 to 15. The first ever National Hardware Virtual Show will feature a full slate of educational programming including seminars. The roster of keynote speakers at the NRHA All-Industry Conference includes Do it Best president and CEO Dan Starr. During the Virtual Show, attendees will be able to sync up their calendars and allow NHS to help facilitate and direct virtual appointments between top industry buyers, retailers and NHS manufacturers. Show organizers plan to return to an in-person format for next year's event, to be held May 11 to 13, 2021.

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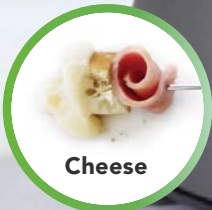
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CanGift adapts with a new virtual market

By Anita Schachter, President & CEO
On behalf of the Board of Directors of Canadian Gift Association

How will you remember 2020? Was this the year you were unable to go to a restaurant, get on a plane and socialize with friends and family or was it the year you finally launched your website, built an e-commerce platform and introduced curbside pick-up?

Hopefully you will remember this year for all the new things you did to move your business forward.

At the Canadian Gift Association, 2020 will be remembered as the year of success followed by deep rooted change. We finally rebranded the Toronto Gift + Home Market into the event we always knew it could be and hosted one of our most memorable shows ever in January. Then, COVID-19 became a household name and all our efforts vanished when for the first time in our 44-year history, we were forced to cancel a Toronto event – our Fall Market.

Like most of you, we knew we had to adjust our business model to survive. With this in mind, we regrouped and provided new program offerings including complimentary member and retailer webinars, blogs promoting initiatives and products from CanGift members and informative information for our community, Instagram Live sessions, and the CanGiftVirtual Survival Guide.

We surveyed members and retailers to evaluate interest for a virtual marketplace. On July 1st, we launched our *Buy the Way, Keep it Local* campaign, high-

lighting local independent retailers across the country and maintaining meaningful connections with prizes from CanGift members to assist retailers in their return to normal sales levels.

CanGift is shining a light on their extensive database of retailers from across Canada who can benefit from additional promotion during this time with the goal of featuring *one retailer a day for 365 days* on the Instagram account **@keepitlocalcanada!**

As this issue of *Home Style* is at the printer, we are about to launch our first CanGift Virtual Market. We know it will never replace the face-to-face show. Rather, the virtual option will allow for different connections and we are confident that any new connection is a valuable one right now.

Our retail community is filled with exceptional, inspiring human beings. Your businesses have transformed themselves because you discovered talents you didn't know you possessed. You have had to rethink the in-person experience as you enhance your safety protocols or perhaps adjust your product mix to reflect changing consumer practices of at home cooking and baking, while working from home. In essence, you have had to overhaul the rules of retail. You are to be congratulated and celebrated.

At the time of writing, we have begun preparing for the Spring 2021 Toronto Gift + Home Market, scheduled to run January 31st to February 4th at the



Toronto Congress Centre. While we are hopeful we will be given permission to hold an in person exhibition, we recognize we live in fluid times and the focus must remain on protecting each other from this virus. We are committed to working with public health to ensure that when we return to hosting you face to face, we will do so safely. As we get through this pandemic, please know the association will continue to support you in every possible way.

Finally, as this chapter of *Home Style* comes to an end, the association would like to thank the lady that is *Home Style* – the brilliant Laurie O'Halloran.

Laurie, your boundless energy, dedication, passion, and unwavering belief in the housewares industry is extraordinary. From all of us at the Canadian Gift Association, we hope your well-earned retirement provides you as much pleasure and enjoyment as *Home Style Magazine* has provided its readers.

Wishing you good health and endless laughter!

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The dark store rises

By Candace Sutcliffe, COO/Co-Proprietor
CA Paradis/The Chef's Paradise, Ottawa

Dark stores are gaining in popularity across various retail sectors. Simply put, a “dark store” is an urban fulfillment center used to simplify the online shopping and shipping process. Pre-pandemic, retailers such as Whole Foods, Wal-Mart, and Bed Bath & Beyond had already envisioned converting underperforming cash and carry locations into on-line only fulfillment centers, to simplify and speed up the parcel delivery process through a ship-from-store model.

Particularly beneficial for grocers, the idea of transforming traditional brick and mortar stores located in high traffic areas into pick, pack and collect outposts has its merits.

According to industry experts, dark stores are becoming a new reality for retailers of all sizes, allowing smart businesses to monetize unused space and reduce unnecessary costs in the last mile delivery process. As the demand for click and collect has surged during the pandemic, companies are also seeking fulfillment centers that can allow same-day delivery or on-demand pick-up without having to make significant showroom investments.

Today's consumers have come to expect next day delivery options (and same day in some cases) courtesy of our friends at Amazon. As demonstrated by this recent pandemic, the demand is especially high for prompt door-to-door delivery on essential goods; the term “essential” is subject to interpretation.

Order fulfillment options can have a

direct impact on a customer's buying habits. Consumers want delivery options that best suit their needs, and in many cases, are willing to pay a premium to ensure they get what they want, when they want it.

As retailers, we face considerable competition from our peers; and differentiating the delivery options during the sale journey is becoming increasingly important in converting shopping carts and winning over consumer loyalty in-store and online.

According to U.K.-based MetaPak, 45% of customers say they've abandoned a cart due to poor delivery options, and another 58% of consumers say that they have purchased from one company over another because of the delivery options available.

Dark stores are more likely to attract crowdsourced delivery drivers allowing retailers to offer 1-2 hour delivery turnaround in urban areas. Postmates, the U.S.-based food delivery company, diversified its offering by connecting its fleet of contract couriers with local retailers of all sizes and specialties. The service connects their user database, via an app, with their Global Positioning System capabilities to match partner inventories to consumer demand. I recently experienced this first-hand on a trip to California where my sister-in-law “needed” a black t-shirt for an evening out. Within the hour, a crisp, size small American Apparel showed up at the door! Gobsmacked.

A hybrid dark store model is a blend



of instore and online fulfillment. Bed Bath & Beyond recently announced that it is converting 25% of its regional stores into local fulfillment centers. The idea is to put fulfillment centers in densely populated areas to shorten delivery times and provide a faster and more convenient shopping experience.

The need and demand for improved “last mile” delivery convenience has only grown in recent months. Wal-Mart and Target have both cordoned off floor space to dedicate inventory and staff to online orders.

While the dark store concept may only seem to apply to a multi-store model, as independents we need to learn how to leverage our strengths (in-stock local inventory) with a more global approach (online presence combined with a world-class checkout experience).

Even after the coronavirus has subsided and consumers try to return to some kind of normalcy, we'll be faced with a new normal. Shoppers who have experienced same day delivery, curbside pickup and a simplified e-commerce experience will likely adopt and expect some of these habits into everyday life. Many stores will still be facing the challenge of limiting the number of customers to instill proper social distancing measures. Dark stores (or dark store sections) may help ease some of these transitions, while protecting customers and employees.



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ON THE MENU

Sous vide flap steak with herbed fresh cheese



Sous vide flap steak with herbed fresh cheese

PREPARATION 15 minutes

COOKING 1 hour 5 minutes

SERVINGS 2

Flap Steak

¾ lb (340 g) flap steak, 1 inch (2.5 cm) thick, cut into 2 pieces

1 small rosemary sprig

Toppings

½ lemon

3 oz (85 g) shallot and chive fresh cheese, crumbled

A few rosemary sprigs, finely chopped

Flap Steak

1 Attach the sous-vide precision cooker to the side of a cooking container. Add enough water to come to the mid point between the minimum and maximum required. Set the temperature to 129°F (54°C) for medium-rare (see note). Set the cooking time to 1 hour. Preheat the water while you prepare the meat.

2 Season the steaks with salt and pepper. Place the steaks side by side, along with the rosemary, in a sous vide bag or a freezer bag with a slider closing. Remove all the air from the bag (see note). Submerge the bag in the preheated water. Begin cooking (1 hour).

3 Preheat the grill, setting the burners to high. Oil the grate. Remove the bag from the water.

Toppings

4 Remove the meat from the bag. Grill for 2 to 3 minutes on each side. Grill the lemon half.

5 Serve the steaks on plates. Drizzle with the grilled lemon juice. Top with the cheese and rosemary.

| NOTE |

Depending on the desired doneness, set the sous-vide precision cooker to the following temperatures:

For rare, set the temperature to 122°F (50°C)

For medium-rare: 129°F (54°C)

For medium: 135°F (57°C)

For well-done: 140°F (60°C)

| NOTE |

To remove the air from a freezer bag with a slider closing, hold the bag open at the top while slowly lowering it into the water. The pressure of the water will squeeze the air out of the bag. Just before the top of the bag reaches the water, zip it closed.

If using a freezer bag or one made of silicone, do not submerge the seal of the bag. Clip the top of the bag to the side of the cooking container ensuring the seal will not go underwater to prevent liquid from leaking into the bag.

It is important to ensure the food is fully submerged under water throughout cooking. If the food bag floats above water, use a large, heavy metal spoon, plate or any other heat resistant utensil to weigh the bag down to keep the food submerged.

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A culinary hub in a quaint fishing village

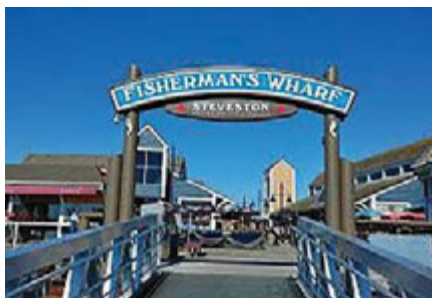
In a world dominated by online sales and social media influencers, retailers Dorothy Chan and Leo Chang find success with their old-school approach

By Jane Zatylny

For millennia, Indigenous people came to the rich fishing grounds near Steveston at the mouth of the Fraser River, some 25 km south of Vancouver, to supply their families with salmon, sturgeon, and other fish. Much later, European settlers established farms, canneries, and a shipyard in this area, including the Gulf of Georgia Cannery and Britannia Shipyards, both National Historic Sites of Canada. The town boomed from the 1880s to the 1910s and was populated by residents and workers from near and far.

Today, people continue to travel to Steveston Village, now part of Richmond, for the fish, to buy fresh salmon, spot prawns, crabs, and mussels straight from the fishing boats at Fisherman's Wharf. They also come from around the world to this old fishing village to walk its waterfront trail, view some of the oldest architecture in the Lower Mainland, browse its eclectic shops and heritage sites, and dine at its restaurants.

I've travelled here from my home in Victoria to meet with Leo Chang and his wife Dorothy Chan, owners of Hoya Home Living. As we settle in at an ocean-side café, Leo and Dorothy tell me about their business – and why they



Hoya Living owners Leo Chang and Dorothy Chan with employee Santi Lin in front of their Steveston, B.C. store.

chose Steveston as a location for their specialty cookware shop.

With their mutual passion for cooking and a desire to run their own business close to their family home in Richmond, the couple, who met as students at the University of Regina, opened Hoya Home Living in May 2016. Leo was working in the wholesale home décor industry, while Dorothy worked for the government in Surrey, B.C.

"We both loved to cook, and we knew quite a bit about cookware," says Leo. "We also knew that there were no other kitchenware stores in this area."

Leo and Dorothy had experimented with selling housewares in a mall kiosk, but the long hours were too demanding for them and their young family. They also considered opening a store in Vancouver, but there they would face high rents and a long commute. Nearby Steveston, with its steady influx of tourists and locals, was a natural choice.

"We really like Steveston," explains Dorothy. "We have been coming here for years with our kids to walk or bike, go for fish and chips at our favourite restaurant, and shop for interesting local products."

They chose to locate on a quiet side street in a three-storey apartment build-

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Independent Profile: Hoya Home Living



From Peugeot to Alessi, Hoya Living carries a wide range of international brand names. A website is now being finalized and the owners use Facebook and a variety of Apps to promote Hoya Living on social media and connect with customers.



ing constructed in 1989 with retail on the ground floor and condos above. “We were very lucky that there were a few stores available,” says Leo. “We looked at some on the main street, but they were more expensive per square foot, and there was no back entrance,” he adds. “In our building, we have 1800 square feet plus 500 feet of storage and a back door to a parking lot, which is ideal for deliveries.”

Following their opening on Mother’s Day 2016, business has grown steadily, with many repeat customers. “People tell us they’re happy we are here,” says Dorothy. “They always come in and say we needed something else like this here in Steveston.”

The store’s customer base is about 50% tourists and 50% local residents, mainly from south Vancouver and Richmond. New customers learn about Hoya Home Living through word of mouth as well as through ads in the Richmond News, a local Chinese-language newspaper, and a Steveston visitors’ publication.

“We are one of the stores on the map in the visitors’ publication,” says Dorothy. “I always ask people how they found us, and they say from the map that they got at the ferry terminal or at the airport.”

A sandwich board propped on the sidewalk also attracts attention from a distance, as does the neighbouring Steveston Museum.

With its historic buildings, culture, and sweeping ocean vistas, Steveston may be a thriving tourist destination. But it was also recently voted by CBC as the top neighbourhood in Metro Vancouver from a field of 192 communities. New condominiums in Steveston are drawing younger home buyers with little cooking experience who need to outfit their kitchens for the first time. “We have found that people in this area are willing to pay for quality,” explains Leo. “If they want ‘made in China’, they can get it at the supermarket. People want quality at a reasonable price and a one of a kind selection.”

One of Dorothy and Leo’s early learnings was to not be afraid of staying with

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Independent Profile: Hoya Home Living



upscale inventory. “We thought it would be great to have a range of prices, but that doesn’t really work here,” she says. “If we think about price first when we’re ordering it usually doesn’t sell.”

The store’s recognizable, high-quality brands include Le Creuset, Microplane, Bodum, Mepal, Browne, Jamie Oliver, All Clad, Wusthof, Peugeot, Cuisinart, Staub, Meyer, and Thermos.

Leo and Dorothy deal with about 30 vendors in all, including sales representative Karel Janousek, who markets Le Creuset. “Leo and Dorothy are very professional,” he says. “They do a great job

marketing, and attract a lot of different types of clientele.”

The well-lit store has an appealing, open feel, with white walls, warm, maple-coloured flooring and fixtures, and wide aisles. “Sometimes a family comes in together,” explains Dorothy. “We want them to feel comfortable, and we want to have space for people to have a discussion in the store, so they know what they’re buying.”

Two low shelving units situated in the middle of the sale floor keep sight lines open. One showcases a rainbow-coloured array of cast iron cookware

from Le Creuset on top; the other displays rice cookers, bento boxes, and soft pastel coloured storage containers.

Additional stock is stored on the shelves below. Slat-wall fixtures and shelves line the walls of the square-shaped space, while a cut-out sales counter draws the eye to the back of the store with its Dijon-yellow wall. The front window doesn’t offer much in the way of display opportunities, so Dorothy has positioned logos of their top brands and some of the large, colourful cookware on shelves in this area.

Product categories are broad and include knives, cookware, bakeware, glassware, tableware, crystal, coffee and tea, gadgets, cutting boards, food storage containers, and a curated selection of small appliances, such as the rice cookers, a Jura espresso machine, and a Thermos vacuum cooker. Cast iron cookware is the store’s top seller, followed by gadgets and utensils, and high-end knives.

Unique, new products are very impor-



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Independent Profile: Hoya Home Living



The focus is always on quality products with cookware and fine edge knives as the two best-selling categories.

tant to the business, says Leo. "That's the main thing. We try to find different products from the big kitchenware stores because our customers like to come to our store and find the new things." Bright colours attract, adds Dorothy, noting that their Asian customers have a particular preference for the colour lavender.

The couple attend the Toronto Gift Market and Chicago housewares show and do a lot of their own research on the products they buy. They also experiment with some small, unique categories and brands, which are particularly popular with visitors who arrive on cruise tour buses. These include a selection of Alessi products, Pré de Provence soaps, Victorinox Swiss army knives, and Microplane and Tweezerman personal care items.

"Tourists are often looking for gifts for friends and family that they can easily fit in their suitcases," explains Dorothy. "These items do really well for us."

Sales peak during the summer and Christmas months. This year, of course, has been more of a challenge with the pandemic, with the nearby U.S. border closure and the ban on cruise ships. However, sales have continued to be stable.

"We've stayed open with slightly reduced hours the entire time, and people are really happy to find us open," he says. "They have more time at home and are looking to update the kitchenware that they have. It's been a hard time for some, but we've been lucky."

Karel Janousek seems to think it's more than luck. "I don't know what their secret to success is," he says. "But whatever they're doing, they're doing it right."

COVID-19 has affected some buying decisions. "We used to go to the border to pick up some of our merchandise, but we can't do that now," says Dorothy. "As a result, we're turning to more Canadian brands."

Baking products have been extremely popular during the pandemic, she says, along with BBQ items. "People like them because they can still entertain in a distanced way in their backyards."



Staff wear masks in the store, there is hand sanitizer at both the entrance and sales counter desk, and two Plexiglas shields separate staff from customers at the cash desk. Despite the COVID-19 measures, one on one service levels continue to be prioritized. "Education is very important because our customers want to know more about the high quality of items in our store," says Dorothy.

Leo works five days a week at the store, assisted by Santi Lin, their one full time employee and, occasionally, their son, while Dorothy continues to commute four days a week to her job in Surrey, working Sundays at the store on the accounts and displays.

"It's one of those jobs you don't want to quit," she says. "But this way, only one of us has to travel. And we live close to the school, so the kids can go back and forth by themselves." The store is open seven days a week, from 10 am to 5 pm. Despite the long hours, it's an arrangement that works well for the family of four. "We can choose when we can take off. We can have our life back," she says.

The couple say this flexibility between family and work is the best part about owning their own business. "We are also happy to share the experience of different products with our customers," says Leo. "And we are so pleased when satisfied customers return with positive feedback about our store." ■



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The heart of PROMENU

We look behind the scenes at PROMENU in Ukraine, a housewares store that has always placed a firm focus on the emotional journey of its loyal customers.

By Michelle Hespe

Anyone who has worked in the retail industry understands that retailing is not just about selling a product to someone. It is about understanding the customer and giving them what they need, and possibly even what they don't know that they want.

gia Global Honoree PROMENU – a retailer of homewares and tableware – took this notion to the next level by establishing an educational program in conjunction with psychologists that as-

sists staff in professionally profiling customers. Profiling helps them to better understand personality types, behaviors, motivators and essentially, what a person wants or needs. It's the core of what PROMENU (which can be read as professional menu) does.

"We do not sell. We help to buy," says Oleg Mykhaylenko, owner and CEO of MIRS Corporation, which owns PROMENU. "The main idea is not to sell the goods, but to ensure that the

consumer remains satisfied with the result of their purchase."

Oleg explains another of the company's grounding philosophies is based upon the idea that service is the "what" and innovation is the "how." "With the help of the 'what,' we achieve our goals. That's the secret," he says. "Then we receive the loyalty and trust of our customers, and success to us is a satisfied consumer. Successful retailing is when you are giving to the consumer a little bit more than they expect."

Oleg lives and breathes these philosophies, and he is so in love with his job that he considers his work to be his hobby. "I don't go to work really," he says. "I live this every day and I do not even expect weekends! And I am also sure that for every employee of PROMENU, the work they do also is a special part of their lives."

MIRS started 28 years ago as a wholesaler of the best European brands in home appliance. "We were distributors, so obviously we needed to find customers to enable distribution," says Oleg. "When we studied the entire market here, we realized that no-one was supplying the best products directly to customers, and so we decided to forget



The owners of PROMENU try to show customers what can be achieved by using top quality cookware and tableware.

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GISELA MUSSEN - Sales manager SMEG Canada
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about distribution and open our own retail stores.”

The company then expanded its range into the cooking and serving sector to show Ukrainian consumers (who, at the time, were largely accustomed to using basic, traditional implements such as aluminum pots and enamel pans) what could be achieved through using top international tableware and cooking brands.

At that stage it became clear that our own retail shops required two different store formats – the first devoted to gifts and serving others in the home, and the second focused on cooking and household chores.

“The evolution of these two formats led us to the branding of our two distinct retail chains – PROMENU as the store with the best goods for the kitchen, gadgets and household chores, and the second one, 12 PERSONS, stocking gifts and goods for serving for those with refined tastes,” explains Oleg.

After several iterations, the team came to the conclusion that PROMENU shouldn’t be only about the kitchen and gadgets, but also about solutions to various household chores in the easiest (and even fun) way. “We decided that

ultimately, the brand should be about creating a mood and atmosphere in the home that made families and loved ones feel good,” he said.

The main team that developed the concept and then the stores in the beginning is still with the company, living through its many stages of creation, growth and evolution.

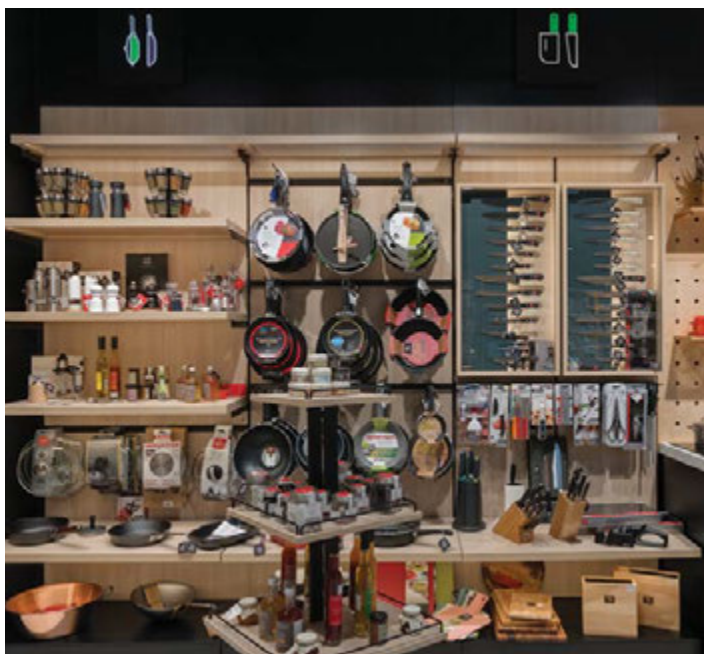
“At PROMENU there is a constant process of the generation and implementation of innovative ideas,” Oleg says. “And I’m sure that there are only a few others who can replicate this approach, taking into account the unbroken decades of experience, unique knowledge in these specialized areas and the absolute readiness for change. Everyone in the PROMENU management team and our store employees become a part of this culture and then the magic happens, which our customers feel and believe. This is why they stay with us.”

Another of the company’s innovative approaches is called “Emotion Point”, which is a concept based upon the research of a consumer’s journey and the ability for staff to shape the mood of the client, and in doing so, ensuring that they return for that same feel-good ex-

perience, regardless of what kind of product they needed or wanted to buy.

“We’ve built our stores and services by identifying the true needs of our customers,” explains Oleg. “We have managed to achieve a feeling of comfort for our clients by asking them what is personally important to them, then we aim to fulfill their desires by creating offers for them and ultimately helping them to make choices that make them happy. We always convey the message to our customers that the main thing they need to achieve is a good mood, and that’s whether you’re preparing dinner for your beloved family as a chef in a Michelin-starred restaurant or doing household chores.”

Oleg thinks it would be difficult for another company to replicate or even come close to what PROMENU does. He says with extreme pride: “I don’t know of another omnichannel store with 100–150 square meters of products selected from more than 100 of best brands, including tableware and household goods, that also comes with an emotional envelope – where communication and a unique system of working with clients based on their needs and desires is also offered.”



After trying several different formats, the team at PROMENU decided that the store shouldn’t only be about the kitchen, but also about solutions to various household chores in the easiest way possible. Above, a mall entrance to the store.



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Hamilton Beach Canada thanks Laurie for her years of dedication and contributions to our industry. Through the pages of Home Style she has provided us with a way to share and stay connected. We wish her a wonderful retirement!

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He's right. This certainty that everyone at PROMENU has – of their store being unique and eternally innovative – led to the Ukrainian retailer being voted as one of the six best retailers in the world for 2020. And despite the *gia* awards being online this year due to COVID-19, this did not dampen anyone's spirits. In fact, it raised them as everyone was able to be present rather than a few select people travelling to Chicago for the awards.

"The sensations were real, a big splash

of emotions and absolute joy!" says Oleg when PROMENU was announced as one of six *gia* Global Honourees. "The organizers did such a great job, and the atmosphere of solemnity was conveyed so well. Strangely enough, thanks to the online broadcast, the whole team had the opportunity to get the whole range of emotions from winning at the same time! It was amazing."

For Oleg personally, and for the entire PROMENU team, he says that their *gia* win was a "WOW inspiration moment."

It was also worldwide recognition for Ukrainian retail for the first time in the 21-year history of the *gia* awards.

"This means we cannot remain in the zone where we are now," says Oleg with unbridled excitement. "The belief, the recognition that we do the right things in the best way, is pushing us forward to become even better. Especially during times like this, when there is a lack of great expectations around, this is an opportunity to achieve much more on this amazing wave!"

To learn more about PROMENU, visit www.promenu.ua.

Sponsored and organized by The Inspired Home Show and the International Housewares Association (IHA), gia (IHA Global Innovation Awards) is the world's leading awards program honoring overall excellence, business innovation and creative merchandising in homegoods retailing.

For more information about the gia retail program, the co-sponsors, or participating in gia, contact Piritta Törrö at piritta.torro@inspiredconnection.fi. Additional information on gia is also available online at TheInspiredHomeShow.com/Explore/Awards/gia-Excellence-in-Retailing.

Dealing With COVID-19

The implications of COVID-19 have made PROMENU more nimble than ever, and the store was able to pivot impressively when lockdown began. "The omni-channel model of PROMENU let us quickly rebuild and offer our customers the opportunity to have a convenient way to receive their favorite goods by ordering online and having them delivered," says Oleg.

Always positive and ready for a challenge, the PROMENU team made many changes in a short period of time, switching quickly from offline to online. As Oleg says: "The only way to be a winner in such conditions is to make decisions quickly and then implement them. If your first approach doesn't achieve the results needed, then try again, change things, and try again until you get it right!" ■



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Countertop cooking

Top trends in heating appliances

By Pam Wood, Director, Home, The NPD Group

The kitchen truly is the heart of the home, and as consumers in Canada have spent more time in their homes, they've rediscovered their kitchens and prepared more meals. To aid meal preparation, consumers have added new appliances to their kitchen countertops in 2020. Sales of countertop cooking appliances have grown by 15% YTD and dollars have grown by 21%.

Consumers have sought comfort foods during this uncertain time. Sales of appliances used to fry food (both air fryers and traditional deep fryers) have grown this year. People also are purchasing appliances to prepare at-home dishes they typically would consume

away from home, and to enhance family life while spending more time together.

In 2019, products incorporating air fry technology grew by 23%. This growth has continued in 2020 – air fryer sales are up 77% YTD. Consumers clearly enjoy having comfort food without the additional calories and health concerns associated with deep frying.

The craving for comfort food also brought a welcome boost to the deep fryer category. The category struggled in 2019 as sales of air fryers grew. Year to date as of July, deep fryer sales have increased 45%.

Waffle irons and sandwich makers have also seen a resurgence this year.

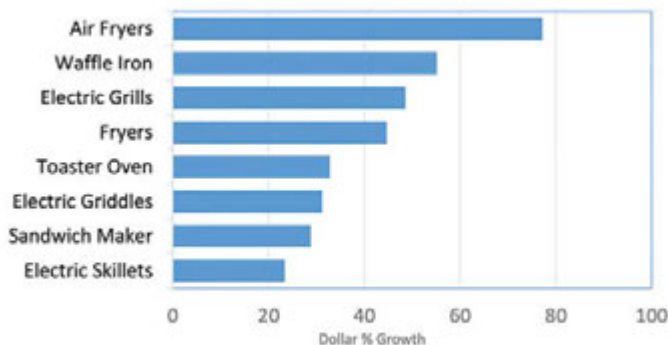
People started baking more in the spring, and waffle irons, baking appliances, gadgets, and bakeware helped make it possible. Waffle iron sales grew by 55% YTD. Sandwiches are very popular with many people working remotely and eating their mid-day meals at home. As a result, sandwich makers have grown 29% YTD.

Toaster oven growth has escalated also, driven by the air fry technology mentioned previously. In 2019, toaster oven sales grew by 13%. The category's growth has intensified in 2020, with sales growing by 33% YTD. Over 85% of the toaster oven category dollar gains were driven by air fry technology as consumers sought models with multi-functional capabilities.

In 2018, the countertop cooking segment was significantly impacted by multi-cookers, which surged in growth as consumers flocked to these time-saving cooking devices. Household penetration for multi-cookers grew, and then growth slowed in 2019. It's true consumers have sought new appliances this year, but they have actually been purchasing fewer multi-cookers since they have more time for meal preparation at home. Year to date sales of multi-cookers are down 21%.

Canadian countertops are much more crowded this year. Small appliance sales clearly have benefited from families spending more time – and doing more meal prep – in their homes.

Top \$ Growth Categories: Countertop Cooking



Source: The NPD Group / Retail Tracking Service, 7 ME Jul 2020

Perfectly in line with Pantone's 2020 Colour of the Year, the Damson Blue Luxe Collection from **Breville** adds a premium look and ultimate functionality to any kitchen. It makes a bold statement as it adds rich colour into any counter space. The Toast Select Luxe delivers convenience with six bread settings – whole wheat, white, bagel, waffles, pastries, English muffins – and automatic capabilities to adjust the toasting time specifically for each type of bread. This compact 2-slice toaster features wider slots to fit larger artisanal bread, thick bagels, and dense pastries. Users can follow the toasting progress with the LED countdown indicator, 'Life & Look' to check if it's done, or give it 'A Bit More' to get flawless toasting.



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Countertop cooking



With the Hamilton Beach Double Belgian Waffle maker you can make two delicious waffles at once. The flipping action makes them fluffy and evenly browned. This versatile Belgian waffle maker has Indicator lights to show when the power is on and when it is hot enough to add the batter. The handle is easy to hold while locking and flipping the waffle iron. The removable drip tray prevents messy spills. Both the drip tray and removable nonstick grids are easy to clean, either by hand or in the dishwasher.



Cuisinart introduces the first Contact Griddler with Smoke-Less mode. This cutting edge kitchen essential makes it easy to cook delicious grilled meals indoors – without all the smoke. The specially-designed plates reduce grease while precision temperature control maintains just the right heat for grilling beef, poultry, fish, and pork to perfection, with maximum flavour and minimal smoke. The one-of-a-kind appliance has been engineered especially for smoke-less indoor cooking but it also includes all of the popular Griddler features home chefs love. In addition, cleanups are a breeze with the removable drip tray and non-stick dishwasher safe plates.



Also new is the innovative Expert-Toast 2-slice toaster, below. It self-adjusts to perfectly toast six types of bread and the 6.5-inch slot can easily fit long slices of artisan breads like sourdough. A 'frozen' function thaws and toasts frozen breads. It's easy to clean with a pullout crumb tray.

The Easy Reach Sure-Crisp air fryer toaster oven from **Hamilton Beach**, above, offers the convenience of a toaster oven with the even crisping of an air fryer. The glass door makes it easy to add and remove foods and the oven has enough room for six slices of toast or a 12-inch pizza. It offers four cooking functions: toast, air fry, bake or broil and has 1400 watts of power. The 30-minute timer with ready bell helps you keep track of cooking time and the 'Stay On' setting makes it easy to extend cooking time when needed. Accessories includes a mesh basket, bake pan and broiler rack.



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*Source: Euromonitor International Ltd, low fat fryers vs per light fryers, category definition: retail volume sales 2013 and 2014

*Compared on fat content of chicken and pork versus low fat fryers

Countertop cooking

A new Sous Vide precision cooker by **Ricardo** offers a touch screen digital control panel with precise temperature control from 20°C to 95°C. The cooking time is adjustable from one minute to 99 hours and 59 minutes. It's waterproof-certified with automatic shut off if the water level is too low. The stainless steel heating element and removable cover are easily cleaned. This cooker provides 1000 watts of power. The clip clamps attach securely to any pot with a recommended tank capacity of 6-15 litres. The instruction manual includes cooking guidelines for meat, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs and vegetables.



The Easy Fry Prestige XL Digital from T-fal, below, has a unique large touchscreen panel for ease and convenience. The stainless steel exterior combines form and function for the modern kitchen. It features eight pre-set cooking modes and a double layer rack that can cook two different foods at the same time.

The new **T-fal** Odour Less grill is designed to let consumers enjoy more of the food they love in a more pleasant way. With this grill, there are no unpleasant odors and meat or vegetables are grilled to perfection. The unit is equipped with a specialized carbon filter that will reduce up to 69% of grilling odors while cooking. From Groupe SEB.



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Countertop cooking

You can make breakfast, lunch and dinner in **Salton's** new 4-in-1 appliance by simply switching out the interchangeable grill plates. This grill can also fully open 180° for flat top grilling (bottom). The non-stick plates are removable and dishwasher-safe for easy clean-

ing. The 4-in-1 grill XL is easy to use, store and clean. It's also ultra-portable making it ideal for the home, office, cottage or dorm room. Also new is the Salton Egg Bite Maker, below. This unit presents a protein-packed option for home or on-the-go. It's perfect for those

on the KETO diet, it can accommodate any lifestyle with a healthy snack that is ready in five minutes. Simply prepare the eggs, customize with favourite toppings and cook. The removable egg tray is non-stick and easy to clean making this unit convenient for batch-cooking.



for fondue. This versatile set can be used with a choice of protein, cheese or chocolate. It features a stainless steel pot and handles, with a 2.5-litre capacity. It has a grey painted exterior and base. There is also a mirror stainless steel fork guide/splash guard. The set includes eight stainless steel forks with colour coded tips, anti-slip feet, a quick release safety cord and LED temperature controller. It provides 1500 watts of power.

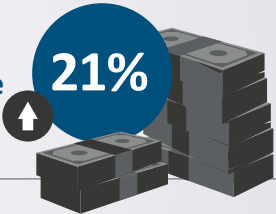


Following the success of the Pure Pan Collection, **Trudeau** is introducing a new Pure 3-in-1 Electric Fondue Set. Shown above, the fondue features a high-performance non-stick ceramic coating that is PFOA and PTFE-free, making it the healthiest choice

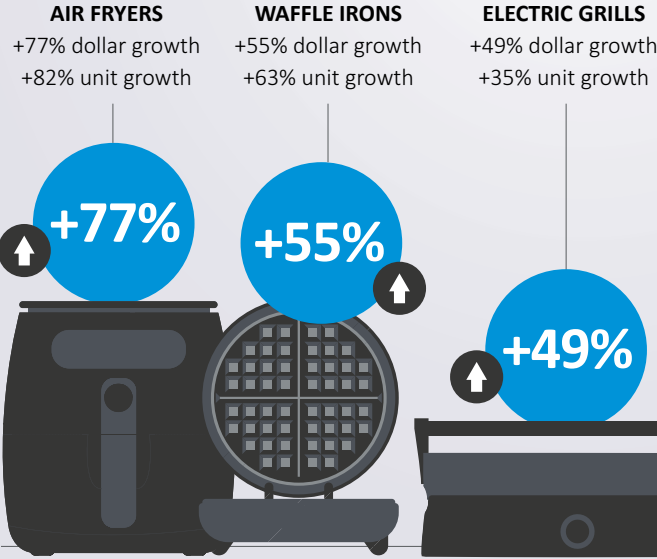
Countertop Cooking is Heating Up!

The kitchen truly is the heart of the home. Since consumers in Canada have spent more time in their homes this year, they've rediscovered their kitchens and prepared more meals at home. To aid meal preparation they have added new appliances to their kitchen countertops. **Here's a closer look.**

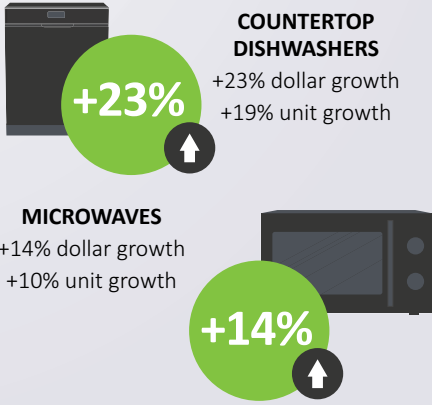
Overall, unit sales of countertop cooking appliances have grown by +15% YTD. Dollars have grown by 21%.



The strongest growth categories include:



We are also seeing growth in countertop dishwashers and countertop microwave ovens.



With reliable data and expert insight about exactly what's happening in small appliances, you can determine the size of your opportunities, react quickly to changing market conditions, and get a clear view of consumer preferences.

Source: The NPD Group/Retail Tracking Service, 7 ME July 2020

Get more insights like this. Visit npdgroup.ca or email chris.kastein@npd.com.



Green living

What's new in eco-friendly housewares



The Goodcook fruit and veggie divider from **Bradshaw**, left, can quarter small fruits and vegetables lengthwise quickly with stainless steel blades. An adaptive fin design accommodates a variety of shapes and sizes. The cutting-sleeve ensures safe and mess-free slicing and slides off for visibility of blades when cleaning. The new In Touch 6-piece stainless steel straw set, below. It features four stainless straws with flexible, colourful silicone mouth pieces. The silicone doesn't retain temperature for added comfort and a clip keeps the straws together when stored. A cleaning brush is included. Also new from Bradshaw is the "Kind" collection of home cleaning products, below left. All Kind products, including the Loofah sponge shown, are made from renewable resources to enhance usability and streamline reusability. Cleaning brushes and sticks come with replaceable brush heads. Three of the four dish brushes use the same interchangeable heads and all packaging is made from recycled kraft paper and twine.



This "Simply Solid" 3-Pack of the 'World's Best' Pot Scrubbers makes a great hostess gift. Available from **Jogi's Imports**, they are made of 100% cotton base-material. These handy scrubbers come in a gorgeous array of colours. Beautifully presented with bilingual packaging and hide-away J-hook for easy retail display. Dishwasher-safe.

Green living



Sourced from the surplus of their own factory production, PLANO is the first recycled collection by Costa Nova. All Costa Nova collections are produced with respect for nature – reusable and recyclable. PLANO goes even further. It's made of recycled materials and completely eco-friendly, while remaining beautiful and functional at the same time. Distributed by **David Shaw**, PLANO presents a

distinctive organic shape, combining rawness embodied in a clean, strong look. Reminiscent of the old hand-turned studio pottery, these unique, high-quality manufactured pieces are designed to be part of unforgettable moments at the dinner table.



The S'well Borealis collection from **DanESCO**, above, captures the beauty of the Northern Lights with jewel-toned hues and stunning shimmer. Perfect for holiday gift-giving, S'well is focused on supporting water programs across Madagascar and also supports UNICEF's efforts worldwide. This fall DanESCO will also be promoting the new Joseph Joseph Stack Food Waste Caddy with odor filter, left. The unique ventilated design of this caddy helps to reduce unpleasant odors from decomposing food. It also reduces moisture and looks great on any countertop. New reusable food wraps, below left, are a natural alternative to plastic wrap. They seal by using the warmth and pressure of your hands. Available in a set of three Leafy Vegan wraps or Abstract Leaves beeswax wraps. Full Circle Tough Sheet reusable plant towels, right, absorb seven times their weight. One sheet equals one roll of traditional paper towels, and one roll equals 30 rolls of traditional paper towels. Each can be hand washed up to 50 times.



Green living



The **Salton** portable blender can go just about anywhere. With a light weight and compact build, an easy to grip silicone sleeve and a convenient carry strap, this unit is truly portable. The extended battery can be recharged anywhere simply by plugging in the USB cable. The 300ml cup and stainless steel blades can handle a variety of blending tasks from mixing protein powders to making delicious and nutritious fruit smoothies. It's the perfect product for people on the move.

When it comes to sustainability, products that last a lifetime top the list, such as Lodge cast iron cookware. The new Dutch Oven and Double Dutch Oven with loop handles are foundry seasoned and ready to use upon purchase. Ideal for all cooking surfaces and oven-safe, the domed cover provides space for roasts. From **Counseltron**.



This cotton Flour Bulk Bag by **Now Designs** features a drawstring design that is great for shopping and storing bulk foods in an eco-friendly way. The bag has an inner lining to hold fine ground foods.

A new House-Shaped Swedish Sponge Cloth by "Ecologie by **Danica**" is made from cotton and plant-based cellulose fibers. Popular in Scandinavia, they offer a sustainable alternative to sponges, dishcloths or paper towels and become soft and pliable when wet for easy clean-up, below.



Made of high quality, food grade stainless steel, these reusable, lightweight, eco-friendly containers feature easy locking clips. Perfect for packing healthy meals on the go, they're available from **Fenigo**.



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Green living



A smart alternative to plastic wraps and foil, the Lékué line of 100% Platinum silicone stretchable, reusable lids help preserve food in the refrigerator easily and hygienically. Available from **Intercontinental**, the covers, shown above, have a useful life span of at least 10 years. A vacuum seal is obtained by pressing the centre of the lid, which prevents odors or

liquids from escaping. Lékué also offers a line of reusable sandwich and baguette cases, below. The 100% Platinum silicone cases are flexible and adjustable to form perfectly around the sandwich. The elasticity prevents the sandwich from moving around. There is even a space where the ingredients can be written – it's erasable with a wet cloth. They fold up easily and are dishwasher-safe.



The CHICAGO steel infuser tumbler from **Grosche** is ideal for anyone on the go. It comes with an extra long stainless steel strainer for infusing tea and fruit. It's also double wall insulated to keep drinks hot for 12 hours and cold for 24 hours.



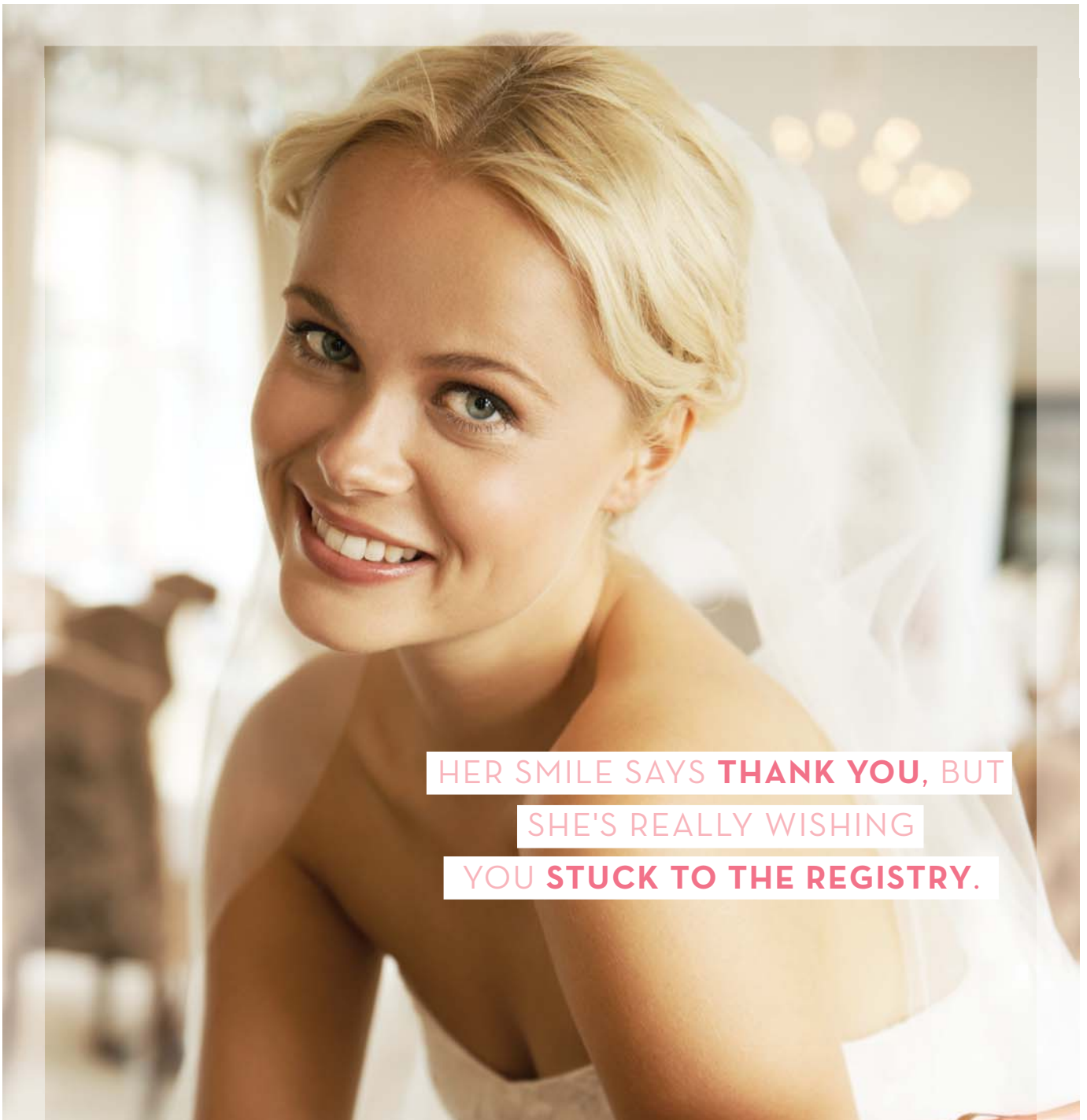
Consumers can now extend the life of their **Ricardo** beeswax food wraps, above, with blocks of 100% natural beeswax. Compostable and biodegradable, the beeswax is packaged in a peggable envelope. New from Ricardo this fall is a range of compostable sponges, below left. Made of 100% natural, 70% cellulose and 30% cotton, the wet sponges will expand to full size when moistened. Also new is this biodegradable lunch box made of renewable, natural plant material, below right. A steam release vent on the lid can be opened when heating in a microwave. They are safe for both the freezer and dishwasher and come packaged in a silicone sleeve.



A new 7-piece cutlery roll from **Abbott** is made of dishwasher-safe bamboo, all wrapped in a durable cotton pouch. It's easy to store and transport. Also new from Abbott is this Plaid Takeaway Cup, below. Made of bone China, the 12-

ounce cup features a timeless red and black buffalo plaid pattern and spill-proof silicone lip.





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Home Style would never have been successful without the generous support of our advertisers. But just as important were the writers who made it such a compelling read. I am grateful to **Jane Zatylny, Ann Lindsay, Anthony Stokan, Cynthia David, Denise Gaze, Jennifer Cox**, and, especially, **Candace Sutcliffe**, for their invaluable contributions. I must also acknowledge my sensational graphic designer **Robin Forsyth**. Multi-talented, creative, kind and so patient, Robin has designed our covers and worked on the layouts for dozens of advertisers over the years. She has been an essential part of *Home Style* and producing this magazine would not have been possible without her. – L.O.

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My FIRST typo

The first issue was mailed in a clear polybag with this special insert card, on which the word 'complementary' was used incorrectly.



My WORST typo

This is as bad as it gets. In January 2011, an article about retailer Traudie Kauntz had a glaring 60-point typo in the headline! She didn't even notice, and, sadly, neither did we.



And in the beginning...

Home Style debuted in January 1990 with a 96-page issue (left) featuring a preview of the Canadian Hardware Show which, at the time, was the largest housewares show in Canada. On the Calendar of Events page, there were 12 trade shows listed! It was a lively time in the industry as it was on the cusp of explosive growth. In this issue, we also interviewed industry executives on the impending impact of the new GST. The original logo was redesigned by Mark Braude (son of Jeremy) in 2003.

My proudest moments over the past 30 years



Chairing Canada Night with my friend (and treasurer) Roger Smith has been a highlight of my career, left. Over the past 20 years it has been my pleasure to sponsor 24 Global Innovator Award winners, Five of those honourees went on to win the Global award, including Ben and Sue Boschman of Lakehouse, below left. In 2016, I was honoured to receive the Hardware Housewares Industry Hall of Fame award, presented to me by Vaughn Crofford of the CHMA and retailer Jerry Cayne, below.



What was I thinking?

My daughter claims I've never met a cliché I didn't like – or use. In this case I took it to ridiculous visual lengths. The year was 1991 and I was featuring The Bay's new small appliance buyer, Louise Fior. We were about the same age and had become fast friends, which is why she probably agreed to this silly photograph of her 'climbing the ladder'. Hanging assorted housewares products from the steps added to the 'in your face' approach. The only thing missing was a 'glass ceiling' for her to break through! To make matters worse, when the article came out it had a record number of typos.



Thanks for the memories

By Kate Wise

In the fall of 1987 an editor by the name of Laurie Merckel called to ask if she could interview me for an article in *Housewares Canada* magazine. At the time I was the small appliance buyer for Consumers Distributing, the country's largest retail catalogue. I was one of only two female buyers in the category – the other was Mary Edwards at London Drugs – so this was an exciting opportunity in my career. It was a chance to show Canada that women could do the job as well as men.

With nervous anxiety I awaited my interview. From the moment Laurie showed up, I knew I was dealing with a brilliant young journalist. I didn't know I was meeting a woman who would turn into a treasured, lifelong friend.

The article was flattering but fair and, as a sidebar, I was teased mercilessly by my peers and associates for the headline on that cover. But as one knows, even bad publicity is good publicity.

Not too many years after that article was published Laurie launched her own magazine called *Home Style* along with her future husband Michael O'Halloran. All the companies that I worked for believed in her publication and provided advertising support whenever possible.

She kept our industry up to date with astute profile articles, insightful editorials and information about the people and the products in our own industry and around the world.

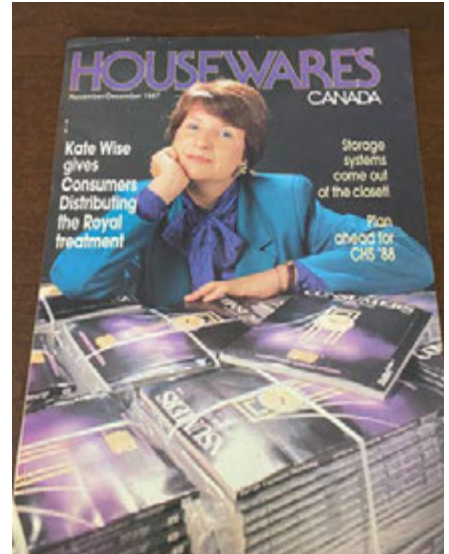
We have accompanied each other to many international trade shows and we have partied together often over the years. Our annual women's dinner in Frankfurt was legendary.

Laurie has hosted dinner parties at her house for many vendors and buyers over the years. She even held my retirement party in her home.

When Canada Night in Chicago needed a boost, who did they turn to? Who worked tirelessly for the Global Innovator Awards from their very inception in 2000? Who made sure that our Canadian retail industry was always well represented around the world? Who spent countless hours helping vendors organize the Happy Hour parties after the Toronto gift shows? Laurie.

She is responsible for so many Canadian wholesalers, distributors and retail buyers meeting and mingling, with no pressure, after a long day at a trade show. She encouraged us to celebrate our Canadian industry and made sure that, at the end of the day, we were all friends as well as business associates.

Laurie is Articulate, Brave, Caring, Dedicated, Energetic, Faithful, Gregari-



ous, Happy, Intelligent – I think you get the gist. There is a word for every letter in the alphabet to describe my dear friend.

Laurie, the entire industry thanks you for your devotion and – there is no other word for it – your tenacity. Most of all, thank you for your friendship.

There will never be another Laurie O'Halloran and we will all miss you. I wish you every happiness and success in the next chapter of your life. I know it will be more than one chapter, though, now that you are planning to write that book you have been threatening for so long. Make sure you send me a copy.



Top: Kate on the cover of *Housewares Canada* in 1987. Left: Friends gather at Laurie O'Halloran's home for Kate's retirement party, co-hosted by Anji Levy, in January 2017. Above: Together with Nancy Whitmore, left, and Mary Ann Amodeo, right, Kate organized a surprise party to celebrate *Home Style*'s 20th anniversary in 2010.



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