

# HomeStyle

Canada's Housewares Magazine



January 2015

COOL TOOLS &

**GOURMET**

*gadgets*

Hot New

KETTLES & TEA  
**PRODUCTS**

ENTERTAINING  
**OUTDOORS**

**A BUYER'S GUIDE TO THE  
TORONTO GIFT FAIR & NY NOW**

TOP  
*food trends*  
FOR  
**2015**

*Plus*

WE PROFILE...

WINE EXPERT  
**MICHELE HIRST**

*&*

**THE DYNAMIC DUO**  
BEHIND THE PAN TREE



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## Opening Lines

### Looking on the bright side

For me, Christmas night has always been a very sad time. After the last guests have left, the dishwasher has been loaded and the turkey bones are simmering in the soup pot, I pour myself a port, put Frank Sinatra on the stereo and sit down in my favourite chair to have a good cry. I think of the people I've lost, the bad decisions I've made, the opportunities missed and generally feel pretty darn sorry for myself.

When the tears flow, so does the stress – right out of my system. By the time I head to bed, I feel better and a week later, I'm ready for New Year's Day which, by comparison, is my favourite day of the year. That's because, like many of you, I am an eternal optimist and the new year brings with it a fresh start, a chance to do better.

I can honestly say that I wake up most days happy. My friends often describe me as cheerful and upbeat and my wonderful mother is the most optimistic person on earth. I do hope I'll follow in her footsteps because she is a joy to be around.

When I incorporated this company in September 1989, I was just 29 years old but very determined to make *Home Style* a success. Fear was not an option, and failure never entered my mind. Instead, I listened to good advice, learned from my mistakes (and boy there have been a few good ones) and remained determined to produce the best trade magazine I could. Every new issue gave me a chance to start over, to improve and try to get it right. I think I'm finally getting close.

I know it's traditional, after a quarter century, to look back and reflect on what's past but I don't want to do that. I stay in touch with enough retirees to have that pleasure on a regular basis. Instead, I want to look forward to a future that I'm convinced is bright, despite the challenges that lie on the horizon. One thing I've learned is that there will always be challenges, they're just different today. It's 2015 and I'm the publisher of a printed magazine for bricks and mortar retailers, so I know a few things about challenges. It's how you approach those challenges that matters.

It helps to genuinely believe in what you do. I've said it before but I'll say it again: this is the best job I've ever had. It often doesn't even feel like work, which probably makes me one of the luckiest people in the world. The rewards are too great to mention and the ability to spotlight so many fascinating people, both retailers and vendors, has opened my eyes to the true potential in all of us.

Retailers have to be optimists. Why else would they become retailers? That's probably why I feel so connected to many of the people I feature in these pages, people like Michele Hirst, profiled on page 36. Smart, enthusiastic and very funny, you can feel her positive energy the minute you meet her. When you have that kind of passion for your job, good things tend to follow. In fact, psychologists have shown that optimism is the engine of capitalism. It's the one trait that all entrepreneurs share. Though it may be a delusion, we tend to think our fate is entirely in our own hands and that skill and hard work will invariably lead to success. Even though only a third of small businesses survive five years, 81% of new business owners think their chances for success are 70% – or better. It may be a delusion, since in reality success relies far more on outside factors. But it's a useful delusion that will keep you moving forward and resilient when faced with obstacles.

One thing I've tried to do in this magazine (and in life) is bring out the best in people. I have actually been criticized for always trying to put a positive spin on things but honestly, why would I do otherwise? Yes, I will tackle difficult subjects or controversial issues. But when it comes to profiling retailers, my goal is to share their stories, promote their achievements and lift them up so others can learn from them. My job is not to judge or condemn or criticize. We all get enough of that on a daily basis.

These past 25 years have been the best of my life. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to our loyal readers, generous advertisers, and of course, my incredibly supportive family, who have made this dream of a job come true. Even the constant eight-week deadlines have provided much-needed structure to my life in this ever-changing industry. Those changes are what keeps it interesting.

I can't wait to see what the next 25 years will bring because, like a true optimist, I still believe the best is yet to come.



– Laurie O'Halloran

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**PADERNO**

• Housewares industry veteran **Allan Glube** was recently appointed as chief sales representative in Canada for V-Trust Inspection Service, headquartered in Guangzhou, China.

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• **Kathy Soce**, formerly with Conair, is now sales and business development manager for the Zwilling Group.

• **Magdalena Bettinson** has been promoted to department and specialty retail sales director at Groupe SEB.

• **Jodi Berg**, president and CEO of Vitamix, has been named the EY Entrepreneur

Of The Year 2014 National Family Business Award winner. She received the honor last November at the Entrepreneur Of The Year Awards gala in Palm Springs, California.

• **Rosy Loewith** has joined the Canadian Retail Division of Browne & Co as sales representative. She will be responsible for Southern Ontario along with the Golden Horseshoe region. Owner of Rivet Sales Agency, Rosy brings with her years of experience on the sales management side. She will be taking over the territory formerly held by Margaret Alsemgeest. After 26 years, Margaret retired from Browne & Co at the end of December 2014. (See page 27.)

• After more than two decades with the Hudson's Bay Company, **Lori Longbottom** has left her position as buyer's assistant in the housewares department. Lori has been a great friend to *Home Style* over the years. She will be missed.

## Cookworks kitchen shops change hands



Late last summer, Cookworks Cookware Shops in B.C. officially became part of Cook Culture. After many successful years, Dave Werner (pictured above right) has sold his business to the owners of Cook Culture, led by Jed Grieve (pictured above left).

Jed, along with his new and existing teams, is now operating the locations in the Atrium Building in Victoria, and in Vancouver on Broadway (at Granville) and on Howe (at Hastings), along with the thriving online business found at cookworks.ca. (He has operated Cook Culture in Victoria for several years.)

On his website, Jed says "Cookworks is an exciting operation to bring into the fold, and the two existing businesses complement each other extremely well. Customers will see many new additions coming to each location and because we are now that much larger, we will work hard to offer the best pricing in the industry."

He adds that they won't be rushing making changes during the integration of the two companies. Instead, they are going to make sure they take the time needed to get it right.

It was business as usual at the shops in the important period leading up to the Christmas selling season.

To demonstrate the small world we work in, it's worth noting that Jed is the son of Muffet Billyard-Leake, long-time owner of Muffet & Louisa in Sidney, B.C. and a former winner of the *Global Innovator Award* for Canada. Dave Werner, former owner of Cookworks, also won the *gia* award in 2011.

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## Emails to the editor

I read your editorial in the November issue this morning – brilliant! Good thoughts, a great message and well written, as usual. Thanks for all you do for our industry.

*Roger Smith, United Sales & Marketing*

I got a chuckle out of your last editorial regarding peoples' addictions to technology. I must say I agree with your assessment 100%!

*Mike Zuk, Home Hardware Stores*

I just received the latest issue of *Home Style* and read your editorial. I want to congratulate you for a terrific piece of observation. You hit the nail right on the head about the addiction of cell phones.

I have been complaining about this for a long time. Many of my family members and friends never engage in a conversation face to face but choose to text each other – sometimes when they are in the same room! I prefer to speak directly to people rather than text or hide behind a cell phone. What you don't use, you lose, and that includes personal communication skills.

*Jack Shein, Jack Shein & Associates*

I enjoyed reading the November issue and I couldn't agree more about your opening editorial. Social media is supposed to be about engaging other people, but I just can't get engaged with a phone or computer. I would much rather talk to a person face to face, it's much more engaging.

*Nancy Whitmore, Gourmetbuzz*

The observations in your November editorial are right on! It's so good to see that someone else shares my opinion. Never will I be found on social media, and our cell phone is used as an occasional telephone when away from home – no texting. Unfortunately we have become the minority.

*Philip Jardim (retired), Penhaligan's*

Your November edition arrived today. Loved your editorial. Agree with everything you said. Very well researched with very apt use of quotes and stats. As a society we are living less and less in

the present. This is one big living experiment. Good for 'telcos', not so much for real time human interaction.

*Andrew Pigott,  
The Succession Bridge*

I am so much like you! I hate to see people in a restaurant spending the whole time on their cell phone. We had dinner a few weeks ago when a family of four came in. They ordered their meal and then each of them took out their phone and started texting/e-mailing.

I have a regular cell phone, not a Blackberry, and I manage quite fine. I don't text or get emails by phone, I look at them at the end of each day on my laptop. In fact, for the first 10 years I was on the road, I didn't even have a cell phone. I didn't mind lining up at the service centres with all the other truckers!

*Margaret Alsemeest, Browne & Co.*

As I've come to expect; yet another thought-provoking editorial in the November edition of *Home Style*. Thanks for always providing a great read.

*Tom Simpson, Breville*

I thoroughly enjoyed reading "Our Strange Addiction" in the Opening Lines of the November issue. I have seen this strange addiction enter our lives at our regular family dinners on Sunday afternoon. Everyone spends their time before and after dinner time bent over their Smartphones. My plan in the future is to leave an empty bowl at the front door and ask everyone to leave their devices in the bowl until it's time to leave. It will be interesting to see if they are able to fill their time socializing and enjoying each other's company.

I look forward to every issue of *Home Style* and now have the time to read it cover to cover.

*Karl Wulf (retired)*

Just wanted to let you know I'm second person on earth not addicted to her phone. I make it a point to ask my staff or my suppliers to turn them down or off during meetings. I also prefer books, and have boycotted readers. You are not alone.

*Juanita Coumbias, Starfrit USA*

# The Quality Times

Vol 23 - No.312 / Canada / Monday January 5 2015

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**CAST-IRON COOKWARE**

## David Shaw to carry Terre Etoilee

Last December, David Shaw Designs took over distribution of the Terre Etoilee line of high quality ceramic bakeware. The company has been manufacturing fine ceramicware in the Al-



sace region of France since 1830. They have operated under various names over the years and have only recently rebranded as Terre Etoilee.

Each piece in the collection is enamelled with several layers for durability and they take the extra step of also enamelling the base. This provides a finish that is not only more esthetically pleasing but is also more hygienic as it prevents fats or water from seeping into the ceramic through the base.

There are two lines currently offered: Chef and Terre a Feu.



The Chef line goes straight from the oven to the table and to the freezer. It includes rectangular, square and oval baking dishes, plus covered baking dishes and ramekins.

The Terre a Feu collection is specially designed to cook on all heat sources: electric, gas, induction, oven, microwave, even the barbecue. Each piece is freezer and dishwasher-safe. Available in either a black or white matte finish, the range includes round casserole dishes in four sizes, a sauteuse pan and tarte tatin set. The entire range will be on display at the Chicago Home + Housewares Show this March

## Art Shoppe moves after 78 years

After 78 years of bringing the finest home furnishings from around the world to Canadians at its iconic Yonge and Eglinton store, the Art Shoppe has moved to a new home in the heart of the city's interior design district at 71 Kincort Street.

"We are excited to embrace the future and re-launch the Art Shoppe at our stunning new location," says Martin Offman, CEO. "We hope to see our loyal customers at the new store, and also to welcome a new generation of furniture buyers, for whom we have carefully curated new collections to suit any style and budget."

Along with the Canadian-made Art Shoppe-designed collections, customers can browse one-of-a-kind Art Deco items from France, affordably-priced contemporary upholstery lines, and an eclectic mix of accent items.

The Art Shoppe will also debut a brand new, in-store café. But while the location may be new, the Art Shoppe's dedication to customer service remains constant. The company's

skilled personnel roster includes helpful decorators, a "white glove" delivery and installation service, and their own cabinet, upholstery and finishing shops.

## Half of WS sales are e-commerce

More than half of Williams-Sonoma's sales are now made through e-commerce, says Laura Alber, CEO and president. Displaying a strong multi-channel model, the company delivered an 8.7% revenue growth across all brands.

In addition, the company has upgraded distribution and delivery networks. In May, a new distribution center opened in Dallas, allowing brands to shorten delivery times. In the fall, the company introduced "where is my order," an interface for customers on smartphones. Williams-Sonoma also improved online visibility by adding product recommendations and optimizing them prior to the holiday season.

E-commerce grew 14.7% to \$587 million in the last quarter. Well ahead of competitors, online purchasing only accounts for 10% of the home furnishings market, according to a recent report by Fluid and Wells Fargo.

## Cool metallics will be hot this year

While gold shone brightly last year at the fall International Furniture Market, this time it's full-blown metal mania. Metallics of all kinds were red-hot this year, with bronze, copper and brass especially popular on occasional tables, lamps, inlays and accessories.

"The burnished warmth of golden metals and leaf finishes are stylish and trending," says designer Jamie Drake. "After a long period of cool silver tones, glinting gold, brass and bronze are a rich relief that captivate me."

Upholstery also seems to be taking a shine to the look with chairs and sofas in fabrics mimicking a variety of alloys from gold to aluminum.

## Whole Foods plans for growth in Canada

Whole Foods Markets is on an aggressive expansion plan in Canada that will see the number of locations soar to as many as 40. The retailer opened a new store in Ottawa last fall, the first location outside of Vancouver and

Toronto. There are now 10 Canadian stores and Whole Foods is expected to announce details of a Calgary store shortly.

During the opening of the new 41,000-square-foot store in Ottawa's new Lansdowne Park redevelopment, Whole Foods CEO, Walter Robb, says the company wants to add a further 30 stores across the country. There's an expectation that new stores could open in Edmonton, Winnipeg and Victoria, B.C.



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### Credit card deal gives retailers price stability

Last October, Canada's major banks and credit card companies reached a deal with the federal government to cut the fees charged to merchants for credit transactions. The voluntary agreement could mean cost savings for up to 700,000 large, medium-sized and small businesses across the country. However, it's not clear whether the cuts will translate into savings for consumers.

The deal will result in lower interchange fees charged to retailers and service providers for using credit cards to complete direct transactions. The fees would then be capped for an unspecified period of time.

The agreement comes after years of back-and-forth among retailers, the federal government, banks, credit card companies and the Competition Tribunal. Interchange fees currently range between \$1.50 and \$3 or more for every

\$100 worth of transactions, depending on the credit card.

Karl Littler, vice-president of the Retail Council of Canada, says merchants would be happy with a self-policing deal. "The cost of interchange fees is pushing up prices for consumers. Our issue is the overall cost has been driven up by the profusion of premium cards and now super-premium cards."

Littler adds the banks stand to lose the most from any deal to reduce fees, as they are the biggest beneficiaries.

The federal Competition Bureau estimates banks made \$5 billion annually in credit card acceptance fees in 2010 and that figure has likely grown since.

There are about 76 million credit cards issued to Canadians, who use them to pay for half of their overall purchases. High-cost premium cards hurt merchants the most. A majority of the savings from recent interchange fee reductions in the U.S. were passed on to customers.

### Bad service kills half of all purchases

Fifty-seven per cent of the 1,001 Canadians surveyed by AmEx recently said they had abandoned a purchase due to poor customer service in the past year.

In the U.S., the figure was 60%. The figure was highest among respondents in India – 71%. In Mexico and Singapore the figure was 68%.

Japanese respondents were much less likely to abandon a purchase due to poor customer service (36%), even though they placed the highest premium on courteousness.

Customers are also increasingly likely to vent their frustrations about poor customer service online. And the percentage of respondents who believe that companies are paying less attention to providing good customer service has increased significantly, to 40% in the most recent survey, compared to 32% in 2012 and 24% in 2011.

Sixty to 70% of consumers in all markets except Mexico and Japan believe that companies generally meet their expectations for customer service.

Respondents across the board were much more likely to rate value at the right price as the best way that a company can stand out and exceed expectations for customer service.

Respondents wanted more than just polite words. In Canada, 82% of respondents rated providing satisfactory answers to their questions as very important when it comes to excellent customer service. To compare, less than half – 43% – chose being thanked.

In Canada, 76% of consumers said they have spent more with a company because of a history of positive customer service experiences. And 69% of Canadians said they would spend 12% more with a company offering excellent customer service.

In Canada, 50% of respondents told others about their good customer service experiences all the time. But 63% said they complain about poor customer service. Only 21% said they were likely to take to social media to get a customer service response but 51% of said they would use social media to vent frustration about bad customer service.

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# IRON MAN

Ned Bell, Executive Chef of Four Seasons Hotel Vancouver and YEW seafood + bar, loves what he sees in STAUB enameled cast iron cookware; the outstanding variety of gorgeous, durable colours and exceptional performance makes this perhaps the finest cast iron cookware ever made.



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### Marketers focus on single adults

Ikea is pitching apartment furniture to divorced dads, Applebee's turns into a nightclub after dinner and Whole Foods is hosting wine tastings. These companies are all targeting an increasingly coveted demographic: single adults.

More than half of U.S. adults are now unmarried – a 125-million-strong cohort that spends about \$2 trillion on goods and services every year. Economist Edward Yardeni calls them Selfies, who are free to spend selfishly because they're not saving for college, paying off a mortgage or buying clothes for their kids.

"They're self-centered by definition," Yardeni says. "They spend money on themselves or they're saving it for consumption down the road."

For decades, mainstream companies from Procter & Gamble to Kraft Foods targeted traditional families traveling predictable life stages, from buying homes to having kids to retiring. Marketers focused mostly on mom, who controlled the household budget and decided what her family would buy. Now they confront a more fragmented and confounding marketplace, where their target customer could be a millennial too focused on his career to tie the knot, a proudly single woman in her 30s who privately pities her married pals or an empty-nester who just got divorced.

Singles are increasingly seen as a target market in other industrialized nations, including the U.K., Japan and South Korea. In China, Alibaba Group, an online shopping company, has capitalized on an obscure November 11th holiday called Singles Day. Merchants offer discounts of at least 50% and last year rang up \$50 billion yuan (\$9.3 billion) in sales.

Though America has been getting steadily more single since the 1970s, the economic upheaval of the past several years has accelerated singlehood. In September, Yardeni reported that for the first time more than 50% of Americans 16 and older are single. Back when the government started tracking the metric in 1976, only 37% of adults were unmarried.



### Celeb chefs attract mall shoppers

Canada is fast on its way to embracing a celebrity chef "craze" that has been welcomed in major cities around the world, according to a new report that says Canadian shopping malls will be at the centre of this trend.

"Following in the footsteps of cities that have accepted the celebrity chef restaurant craze, such as London, New York, Chicago, and L.A., this is a trend that's certain to continue," says a research paper from CBRE, a global real estate company.

The report details the impact that restaurants are now having on the Canadian shopping experience.

"Restaurateurs in premier malls are stepping up their game in order to match the experience consumers want, and are willing to pay for," says the report, suggesting that the rise of the restaurant should help landlords trying to keep their malls relevant as more Canadians embrace online shopping.

CBRE says "fit out costs" for a new restaurant can be from \$400 to \$500 per square foot and go even higher for what it calls ultra-elite restaurants. The advantage is these restaurants can bring more than \$10 million annually, which translates to sales of \$800 to \$1,000 per square foot – an attractive payoff for landlords who get a percentage of sales in a lease.

Some of the largest landlords in the country are embracing the restaurant trend, including Yorkdale Shopping Centre in Toronto, which is managed by Oxford Properties. Now undergoing a major expansion, Yorkdale has attracted celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, who is teaming up with the King Street Food Co., to open up the first Jamie's Italian in Toronto.

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## Electrolux plans to buy GE Appliances

Electrolux's planned purchase of GE Appliances would help the company better compete with large global rivals, according to the CEO of the Swedish appliance maker. Keith McLoughlin says the \$3.3 billion acquisition would help Electrolux cut costs and provide consumers with innovative products.

Electrolux moved its North American headquarters from Augusta, Georgia, to Charlotte, North Carolina, in 2010, lured partially by a \$27 million state and local incentives package. In September, Electrolux announced a deal to acquire the appliance business of General Electric.

McLoughlin says Charlotte will remain the company's North American headquarters. GE's appliance division is based in Louisville, Kentucky, where the company employs some 6,000 workers.

Electrolux employs 925 people in Charlotte and expects to increase that

number to 1,600 by the end of 2017.

The GE deal, which awaits regulatory approval, comes as Electrolux seeks to gain market share over rivals such as the Whirlpool Corporation and China's Haier Electronics Group. The combined company would have \$22.5 billion in annual revenue and is expected to have about 73,000 employees.

## We're getting close to a cashless society

An Apple Pay rival created by a Canadian company means that the technology for a secure cashless society is only a heartbeat away. Toronto-based Bio-nym's new device, tuned to your individual heart rhythm, is being rolled out with the support of Royal Bank. The wristband is called Nymi. The system combines the two rising technologies of wearable computing and biometric authentication.

The Nymi device reads a user's heart rhythm for identification purposes. Rather than voice prints, fingerprints or retina scans, Nymi uses the unique pattern of a heartbeat as measured by a small wristband. Royal Bank is getting 250 people to try it to make sure the system works in practice, with the plan of rolling it out to all Canadians.

Competition is already stiff in this smartphone-based market. Blackberry has BBM Money. Android has Google Wallet. And Apple has Apple Pay, which some say will do to cash what the iPod did to the music industry. But despite the hype, phone-based mobile payments systems have yet to take off.

According to Bill Maurer, an expert in the anthropology of money, people are largely satisfied with old-fashioned money and plastic cards. "All these mobile wallets are looking for a problem to solve," he says.

While Apple Pay suffered a blow when celebrity nude photos were purloined from its iCloud network, security isn't the only reason cash will be with us for a while yet. For the majority of consumers, a set of ones and zeros in computers just doesn't feel the same as real money.

## GUD sells Sunbeam to Jarden Corporation

Sunbeam's parent company GUD Holdings is planning to sell 49% of the appliance brand to Jarden Corporation, the owner of the Sunbeam brand outside of Australia and New Zealand. As part of the deal, GUD Holdings will purchase 49% of Jarden's Consumer Solutions Asian Sales and marketing business.

The sale is an attempt to fix problems facing Sunbeam in the U.S. that have caused weaker financial results over recent years. The goal is to stabilize the division and return it to profitable growth.

The arrangement with Jarden will resolve Sunbeam's strategic scale problem and the company will be able to access Jarden's extensive product and brand portfolio and product development activities.

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VACUUM SEALERS

## Breville brings The Boss to town

Autumn was a busy season for Breville as the company officially introduced The Boss superblender with special receptions for retail customers and the media. Held at Toronto's Ritz Carlton Hotel in late October, the media luncheon demonstrated the power and versatility of the new machine. It's designed to produce everything from healthy nut butter to the softest milled flour – in just 60 seconds.



The Boss blender is rated NSF for commercial use and performance but is available for at-home use. It combines ingredients evenly using a unique folding action without having to intervene. With the ProKinetix blade and bowl system, the three serrated central blades and three sweeping blades blend ingredients to the finest particle size – something typical blenders can't achieve.

By creating particles that are 50% smaller than traditional blending, the superfine texture results in a smoother mouth feel. Using the same ingredients, The Boss reportedly produces a difference you can taste. The result is a higher nutritional yield with 24% more vitamins and minerals.

The Boss also features a specific Green Smoothie function that can blend even tough kale leaves or chia seeds. With little heat friction, the blender won't cook cocktails however the Soup function lets users blend and cook velvety smooth soups very quickly.

The blender's technology also enables users to mill their own grains into flour without having to purchase a separate jug. The design of the jug and blades can easily handle the task.

Offering exceptional simplicity, the dash board of the blender has six pre-set one-touch programs, including Auto Clean. The additional 12 settings offer manual speed control to create pesto, almond butter or sorbet.

The Breville Boss comes with a seven year warranty, a 76-page recipe book and complimentary access to the Cook'n Recipe Organizer App.

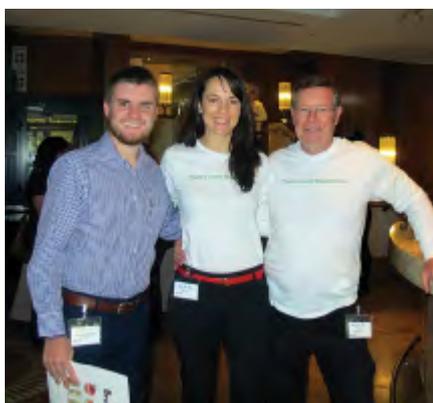
The original award-winning Australian documentary, which features the Breville Juice Master preferred by Joe, has been seen by more than 20 million people around the world and resulted in the NY Times best seller *The Reboot with Joe Juice Diet*. Visit [www.fatsickandnearlydead.com](http://www.fatsickandnearlydead.com)



*Fat, Sick & Nearly Dead 2*, the sequel to the smash hit documentary by wellness guru Joe Cross, made its debut in theatres across Canada in November. Sponsored by Breville, there was a special screening in Vancouver and Toronto in November where the company gave away five juicers plus copies of the new book by Joe Cross.

In addition to an international speaking tour to promote the movie, Joe did morning show appearances on CITYLINE and Breakfast TV in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal (below). He discussed the new movie – which revisits many of the people introduced in the first film – and demonstrated the differences between juicing and blending, outlining the benefits of each.

The original award-winning Australian documentary, which features the Breville Juice Master preferred by Joe, has been seen by more than 20 million people around the world and resulted in the NY Times best seller *The Reboot with Joe Juice Diet*. Visit [www.fatsickandnearlydead.com](http://www.fatsickandnearlydead.com)



On October 30th, Breville hosted a luncheon for Toronto media at the Ritz Carlton. Company president Stephen Krauss outlines the benefits of The Boss blender for guests, left. Shown above, Jesse O'Halloran of *Home Style*, left, with Tania Henderson and Tom Simpson of Breville.





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### Graters are ideal for spices and chocolate

Microplane has added a new shape to its signature line of hand-held graters with the launch of two cylindrical cup graters – the Chocolate Cup Grater and the Spice Cup Grater.

Sturdily crafted, the durable, lightweight cup graters are designed to easily and efficiently add grated toppings directly to sweet and savory dishes and beverages. Standing less than three inches tall, each compact grater features a perfectly round, three-inch diameter size and made-in-America Microplane blade for optimum grating results. The clever “bottomless” design includes a transparent protective cover for safe storage. When flipped over, it acts as a base to catch grated ingredients.

The Chocolate Cup Grater is perfect for grating chocolate, coconut and hard candy like peppermint. It's outfitted with Microplane's medium-size ribbon blade, which can be used in both directions.

The Spice Cup Grater features Microplane's super-fine spice blade to effortlessly grate cinnamon sticks and whole nutmeg. Additionally, unique shaker holes are strategically placed at the perimeter of the blade allow for convenient sprinkling of grated ingredients.



### Keurig's cold beverage maker set to launch

Keurig is on target to launch its new cold beverage maker in the fall of 2015, according to Keurig Green Mountain CEO Brian Kelley.

“We are on track with our product development efforts, including brewer technology, the manufacturing of pods and appliances and all of the brand development required,” he says. “We will continue to work with our partner, Coca-Cola, in all aspects of the Keurig Cold system in preparation for launch.”

Kelley feels the growth potential for cold systems in North American and globally is significant since cold beverage categories are more than four times the size of hot beverage categories.

“Keurig Cold will empower consumers to create a wide variety of fresh, great tasting beverages at the touch of a button in their homes and do it in a sustainable way,” he explains. “Bringing beverage creation into the home through the Keurig Cold system will actually require 30% less water than producing a beverage via a traditional bottle or can process.”



### Martha says a 3D printer is a good thing

Martha Stewart's affinity for drones has been well-documented, and now she's trained her domestic eye on another buzzy emerging technology. Stewart has launched a line of custom designs with 3D printing darling MakerBot.

At her American Made conference last November, she paid lip service to several companies using the next-gen manufacturing. “With a 3D printer, you can design a product and immediately do a small production run without having to create an expensive mould – and without forfeiting your individual design touches and personal aesthetic,” she told CNN. “No wonder 3D printers have become so popular among artists and designers.”

The barrier for entry is quite high when it comes to 3D printing, and it's tough to make a case for buying one of these machines for at-home use when they start at about \$1000 U.S., although there are more experimental printers that go for far less.

MakerBot has some of the best community support out there but there's still some serious technological know-how required. 3D printers aren't for the casual DIY enthusiast in the same vein as, say, decoupage a lamp.

So far, the Martha-MakerBot line consists of a set of table accessories (above) which look like they were shrewdly thrifted by some Martha Stewart Living stylist. MakerBot is also offering three Stewart-branded vintage-inspired PLA filament colours: Lemon Drop, Robin's Egg and Jadeite, so creations can be conceived within the Martha palette.

A recent Gallup survey reveals that seven out of 10 employees have ‘checked out’ at work or are actively disengaged. Only 30% of workers are enthusiastic about or committed to their workplace. About 50% of full time workers are simply ‘going through the motions’ while 20% actually ‘hate going to work’ every day.

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## Margaret Alsamgeest retires

Friends, customers and colleagues gathered at Cirillo's Cooking Academy in Toronto last Remembrance Day to pay tribute to an industry sales rep who will be very hard to forget

Thirteen years ago we launched a new column called Super Sales Person that has now become a back-page favourite. I had been profiling outstanding kitchenware retailers in *Home Style* for years, and I suddenly realized that most of them had been introduced to me by the sales reps who were calling on them. But these sales reps were not just an important source of industry information, I also found that most of them were funny, fascinating people in their own right. I decided it was time to start featuring these super sales people in the magazine on a regular basis.

Deciding which rep to profile first was easy. Every retailer in southwestern Ontario told me Margaret Alsamgeest at Browne & Co. was the best in the business. Though she had only been a sales rep for six years, her kindness, resourcefulness and generosity were already legendary across southwestern Ontario. So in July of 2001, Margaret became the first super sales person ever to be featured in *Home Style*. And let me tell you, she set that bar very high. As her friend Berni Gelinis said in that article "Margaret is a guardian angel for the housewares industry."

Since then, I have had many opportunities to see first hand why retailers were so enamored with her. She has become not just a friend, but an example to be followed. She's the kind of sales rep who would remember the name of your kids *and* your grandkids. The kind who would bake a cake on your birthday, and be at your side in times of sorrow. If one of my readers won an award, Margaret would contact me immediately to make sure we covered it in the magazine. Margaret was the one person I could always count on to get back to me with an answer, usually within 24 hours.

Retirement is such a bittersweet occasion, and it is especially so with Margaret. Our industry just won't be same without our guardian angel. – Laurie O'Halloran



Peter Browne shares a laugh with Margaret as he recalls some of the highlights of her sales career.



Katherine Samuel, who now works for the commercial side of Browne, bids a fond farewell to a dear friend.



Everyone at the party was thrilled to see Jolanta and Jogi Sudnik of Jolanta's Interiors. Jolanta has suffered from very serious health issues over the past few years.



Marjorie Agnew of the Main Course, has worked with Margaret for 20 years and was happy to share in her special evening. She's shown with store manager Sandi Diggins, left.



Sales manager Trevor Kidd welcomes guests and shares some of his favourite memories of Margaret.

## Social Scenes



Left to right: Wendy Bateman of Browne, Laurie Oehy and Heidi Oehy of the Academy of Culinary Arts, Margaret and Lynne Boni of From the Kitchen To the Table.



Laurie O'Halloran of *Home Style Magazine* presents Margaret with a special commemorative cover.



Fred Pritchard, left, and Howard Goldstein, right, of Golda's Kitchen with Peter Braley, vice president of Browne & Co.



Carol Grimes and Sue Andrew from Jill's Kitchen with Margaret's husband, Richard Morris, who gave a heartfelt speech.



Lawrence Burden of Kiss the Cook in London chats with Shannon Rea, left and Traudie Kauntz of Household China & Gift.



Vince Menchella of iQ Living, centre, and Robb Dagenais with Rosy Loewith.



Laurie O'Halloran with Pat Spalding of Teatro Verde, right.

# COMING NEXT JULY...



**A who's who of the Canadian housewares industry, this special issue is being published to celebrate the 25th anniversary of *Home Style Magazine*.**



To find out how you can have your company featured in this special issue, please contact Michael O'Halloran at 905-338-0799 [michael@homestylemag.ca](mailto:michael@homestylemag.ca)

### Latest trends on display in Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Houseware Fair, set for April 20 to 24, will offer buyers a comprehensive selection of products for the home. The largest Asian fair of its kind under one roof, it features more than 2,000 exhibitors from more than 30 countries and regions.

The international spring gathering will provide a snapshot of global lifestyle and houseware trends for the year ahead. In 2014, more than 28,000 buyers from 119 countries and regions took advantage of the opportunity.

For 2015, zoning has been further refined to reflect buyer needs. Zone highlights include:

- Hall of Elegance, with collections representing the trendiest new designs;
- World of Pet Supplies, a full range of pet products including aquarium and healthcare products, toys & accessories;
- Creative Art & Cultural Craft, with decorative arts and craft pieces.

New zones for 2015 represent growth markets such as:

- Bath, Beauty & Healthcare
- Festive Decor
- Home Cleaning
- Storage Solutions
- Wine Tools & Accessories

The Hong Kong International Home Textiles and Furnishings Fair will be held concurrently with the Hong Kong Houseware Fair. For more information, contact [exhibitions@hktdc.org](mailto:exhibitions@hktdc.org).

### Ambiente reinforces number one position

Dining, Giving and Living are the names of the three segments at Ambiente, the leading international trade fair. Scheduled for February 13 to 17, it will feature 4,700 exhibitors displaying goods from the field of design, innovation and lifestyle trends in 27 halls. With around 2,200 exhibitors in 16 halls, the Dining segment represents the entire market for table, kitchen and household wares. It covers everything from the premium segment right up to the volume business.



The Kitchen product group offers utensils for cooking, frying and baking as well as flatware and cutlery plus small appliances and equipment for the modern kitchen. In the Kitchen Trends section, visitors will find a range of utensils for preparing cocktails at the bar of a five course meal.

Tableware, fine china and casual dinnerware at all levels will be on display in the Table segment (Hall 4). From manufactories via design oriented companies to branded companies and specialists for the tabletop segment, this is where purchasers will find the unusual, the exquisite, the trend-setters and the revenue generators.

In Halls 5 and 6, the Houseware and Storage product group offers utensils for making everyday life simpler. Whether it be for storage, cleaning or preparation, vendors can always score high points with their customers with practical and stylish housewares.

As the largest sourcing platform outside China, Ambiente offers purchasers ideal conditions for the volume business. Thanks to its clear structure and short paths between the product groups in the Passage section, orders can be placed efficiently and across industries.

For more information, please visit our website at: [www.messefrankfurt.com](http://www.messefrankfurt.com).

### Zuchex trade fair makes history

The launch of the Zuchex Indonesia International Housewares & Gift Fair took place last November at the Jakarta Convention Center. It made history as the first event of its kind in Indonesia, providing a platform for housewares buy-

ers to network and do business over the course of three days. Over 150 exhibitors from Indonesia joined foreign players from Turkey, Tiongkok, Malaysia, Korea and China.

The show attracted an audience of 3,129 buyers from major retailers in the region. The event reportedly provided an ideal business solution for busy industry players searching for the latest global housewares trends and exciting new products

For more information please visit [www.zuchexindonesia.com](http://www.zuchexindonesia.com)

### Style and substance at Las Vegas Market

International Market Centers is promising to provide Las Vegas with more substance. The Las Vegas Market, set for January 18 to 22, will offer participants more furniture, gift and home resources than ever before, with both new and expanding showrooms, and a record number of temporary exhibitors.

The market also will offer the third annual Las Vegas Market CEO Summit and a slate of educational programming presented by industry leaders.

The Las Vegas Market is continuing a second phase in its three-year gift and home décor strategic growth plan, complementing existing strength in furniture and bedding with new resources. It anticipates expanded showrooms to welcome market participants in virtually every category.

"Las Vegas Market is experiencing strong and sustained growth within in gift and home décor, as well as strategic expansion into new categories, including lifestyle merchandise, specialty tabletop and better home décor," says Dorothy Belshaw, IMC president of Gift & Home Décor. "The addition of many new exhibitors as well as the accelerating pace of renewals signals the industry's continuing confidence in this event as the leading furniture, home decor and gift destination in the western U.S."

For the winter 2015 market, IMC will position temporary exhibitors in 14 categories on five floors.

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**PHILIPS**

# Price wars: The retail menace

by Candace Sutcliffe, Retail Manager,  
C.A. Paradis/The Chef's Paradise, Ottawa



I'm certain most of you have experienced that sense of euphoria after nabbing that special something at an "unbelievable price", whether it was needed or not. Researchers have been able to identify how genetics play a role in the discount shopping experience, and why some are more predisposed to it than others.

The typical reaction to a sale releases a jolt of dopamine, which is a neurotransmitter that helps control the brain's reward and pleasure centers. In his book, *Bargain Fever: How to Shop in a Discounted World*, author Mark Ellwood has cleverly coined the reaction as a "dose of buyagra". It works like any other intoxicant, the more deals you experience, the more you crave the rewards – and from personal experience, the effects of "buyagra" can last for several hours!

Ellwood also notes that the percentage of inventory a reseller offers on sale has doubled in the last decade and continues to be on the rise. Sale merchandise accounted for roughly 40% in 2011 versus only 15-20% in 2001. He predicts that retailers will soon be offering more products on sale than they do at full price. But not all brands are buying into this new way of selling.

Nespresso is probably the most notable in our industry. While they do offer promotions on the machines (primarily in the form of their coffee credit), the capsules themselves NEVER go on sale. Despite the onslaught of 'copy' capsules since their patent expired in

2012, buyers are still paying a premium for their exclusive blends. They have intentionally restricted distribution of the coffee in order to maintain control of their brand and more importantly, their profits.

2014 seemed to be a catalyst year for price governance by retail suppliers in Canada, mostly to protect against the transparency of online pricing. For the most part, the widespread use of MSRP and MAP pricing policies are being welcomed by Canadian retailers, particularly on low margin and premium brand goods, while allowing suppliers and distributors to realign North American pricing between Canadian and US trade channels. However, MSRP is merely a "suggestion" and MAP only protects any advertised price. Suppliers are moving more to "limited and exclusive" product launches within the housewares industry where distribution is restricted to a select number of retailers, whose pricing and advertising are closely monitored in order to protect the brand image and profit margins on these items.

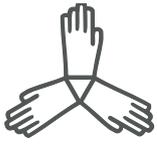
Changes to section 76 of Canada's Competition Act in 2009 amended criminal provisions in favor of civil punishment to any supplier that tried to enforce a market price to their resellers. Prior to 2009, price maintenance was seen as anti-competitive and punishable by criminal law which imposed hefty fines and/or up to 15 years imprisonment. The criminal provision was

broadly worded and included all forms of price maintenance, regardless of their market effect.

Price fixing still remains an offense in Canada; however, policing the resellers who disobey is not an easy task. Reseller agreements are increasingly being used to protect brands but they are not easily enforced.

While the future of retail pricing is a complex issue, the new retail world is one in which prices will fluctuate and be tailored within each individual transaction. As stores become more modernized, sale tags and price stickers are also becoming a thing of the past. On a recent trip to Le Bon Marché in Paris, I was amazed at the small digital price screens that sat neatly in front of each item in their vast food hall. I was advised that the retailer is able to effect price changes on the shelves from a back office, and changes can occur within seconds – very useful on products with fluctuating market prices.

The closure of some significant retailers in both the housewares and fashion industry over the past year in Canada should be a clear indicator that price matters. And while the price war remains in full battle mode, there are sure to be more casualties. ☹️



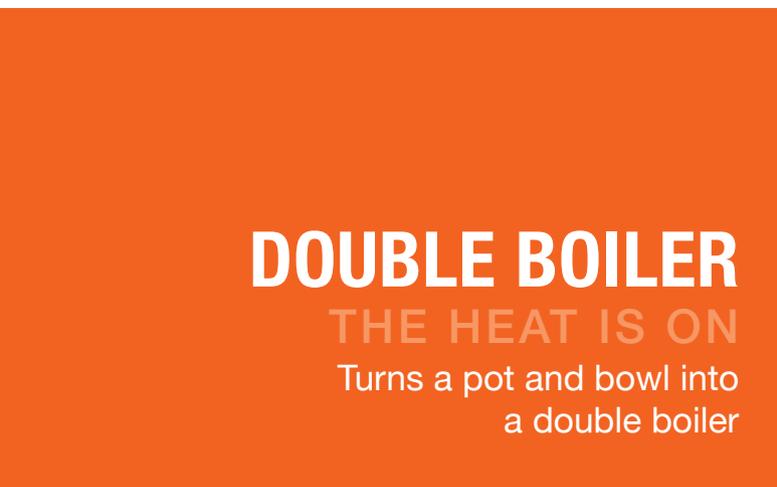
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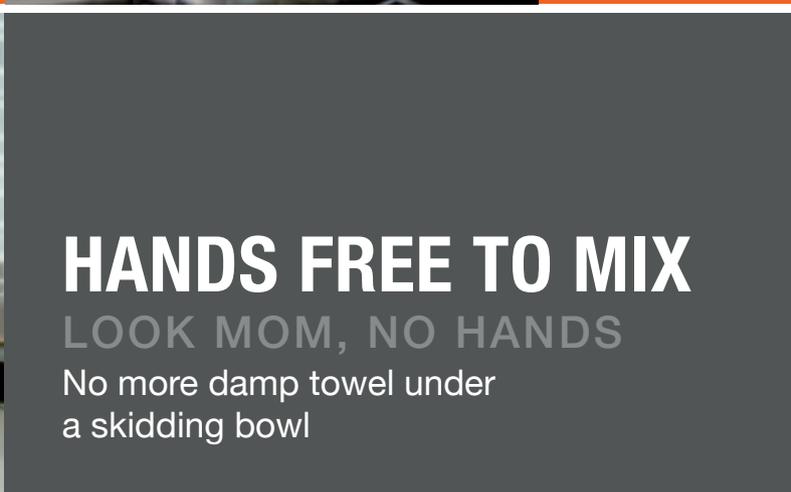
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# 2015 food forecast

John Hale, a renowned recipe developer and gastronomist, looks at what Canadians will be cooking and eating in the year ahead

So what are the future trends for 2015 from a food perspective? According to Hale Food, it's going to be all about the vegetables.

"They will be seen as playing a bigger role in the centre of the plate for entree as well as being used in desserts," says Hale. In particular: cauliflower in the entrée and tomato in the dessert.

"Cauliflower will be used in purees and as tapas ingredients used for dipping. One application of vegetables in desserts is the production of ice cream by means of freezing cream mixed with tomato powder using liquid nitrogen. This can be produced at your table in some of the world's leading restaurants. Liquid nitrogen makes the smoothest, creamiest ice cream you can imagine, it is superb!" Hale explains.

Hale also notes that fermented foods will be attracting attention as trendy foods in 2015. "Non-dairy fermented products like sauerkraut and pickled vegetables will be strong" he claims.

According to Hale this trend of fermentation will also reach into beverages with Kombucha, a slightly effervescent drink made from black, green tea and sugar and mixed with bacteria and yeast. It is claimed to aid digestion, sleep and weight loss, although no research has supported this at present.

For all the snack fans out there, Hale Food has some good news: snacking is strong for 2015!

"The popcorn section in particular will continue to grow," he adds. "Warm and sweet flavours in the popcorn will be coming through and will replace the hot and fiery ones. Smoked snacks and smoking of products at home will also be very popular."



Losing ground in the "continuing trends" category for Hale Food are healthy breakfasts and home delivery services of fresh local produce.

"Specifically at-home healthy breakfasts will continue to thrive in 2015," says Hale, "so smoothie makers and juicers will remain popular."

Locally produced fruit and vegetables have been popular for quite a while now. However, with people becoming increasingly food-rich and time-poor, Hale Food believes the home delivery service for fresh local produce will become much stronger and continue to be popular in 2015.

With at-home food trends for 2015 locked in, it's time to look outwards. Where are the up and coming places to visit for the ultimate culinary experiences of 2015?

First on the list is San Francisco. As well as the usual abundance of seafood and wonderful wines from the Bay area, the slow food movement is having a real resurgence. Lots of vegetables, locally-reared livestock and bountiful fruits are all being prepared using slow methods of cooking. "The wait for the pleasure of eating is longer, but it's well worth it," insists Hale.

Second on the list is Peru. With ingredients sourced from the Pacific coast, the Andes and the Amazon, Peruvian ingredients are overflowing with taste.

"Even those ingredients that we are familiar with come in numerous forms with thousands of potatoes, hundreds of chillies, and different varieties of corn," says Hale. "There is 'lucuma', an Andean valley fruit with distinctive notes of caramel, 'huacatay', a Peruvian black mint that tastes like aniseed and is included in a pungent salsa alongside crisp 'chicharrones' (pork crackling)."

The final area to look at for 2015 is the increasing popularity of the 3D food printer. "It sounds incredibly space age, but consumers are aware they are eating too much processed food, additives and by products," explains Hale. "The Foodini company has invented a new kitchen appliance which is taking us into 3D food printing in our own kitchen. It creates convenience food using fresh, healthy, local ingredients."

As for how soon Hale Food expects this to happen, it won't be immediate. "At the moment, it appears as a gimmick for making intricate edible patterns but we strongly recommend looking into this revolution in food preparation," insists Hale. "It really will be the future in the foodie's kitchen." 🍴

John Hale has launched Hale Food and Associates to help small to medium-sized businesses with technical innovation. His team of professionals includes new product developers, gastronomists, sensory analysts, factory designers, restaurant menu designers and a culinary trendologist who will help clients respond to the future trends in the market. For more details, call 905-616-6090 or visit [www.halefood.com](http://www.halefood.com).



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# Ricardo *the retailer*



On November 25th, celebrity chef Ricardo saw the realization of another dream with the opening of the first Espace Ricardo Boutique in Saint-Lambert, Quebec. It's a concept that Ricardo has been working on for many years following the development of his own brand of kitchen tools, cookware, bakeware and tableware (distributed by Atlantic Promotions).

Inside the 2,000-square-foot boutique, customers will see all the kitchenware and home decor elements that are showcased in the pages of Ricardo magazine. There is also a working kitchen where samples are prepared and handed out weekly.

In addition to the entire assortment of Ricardo-branded products, the store carries at least 40 other brands of housewares and small appliances. A key feature is the addition of a 2,000-square-foot chocolate shop on-site. The Mama Choka shop is managed by Kareen Grondin, Ricardo kitchen director. The shop-within-a-shop will offer a range of freshly made chocolate, caramel, cotton candy, popcorn and more.

The new venture will provide 20 jobs in the Saint-Lambert area.



## Store Opening

Popular Canadian chef Ricardo and his wife Brigitte Coultu, shown on the opposite page, have created a retail space that works as a visual showcase for in-house brands and a variety of national brands. There is also an on-site chocolate factory operated by Ricardo's talented kitchen director Karen Grondin.



# Glass half full

Michele Hirst has turned her passion for food and wine into a thriving, three-store retail business catering to people who enjoy the finer things in life

By Laurie O'Halloran

Some people come into their retail careers after a process of elimination, having tried and rejected a variety of other professions. Others are natural-born entrepreneurs, their destiny determined at a very young age. Michele Hirst, the effervescent owner of *Yonge Street Winery*, is definitely the latter.

Now a triple retail threat, Michele has expanded her original store twice over the years to include not only the wine-making shop, but also *Stems - The Riedel Store*, devoted to glassware and cocktail accessories, and most recently *Vineyard Kitchen*, offering a beautifully presented assortment of premium housewares. She also happens to be a renowned wine expert who takes great pride in her ability to help customers make the right choice for their personal taste and draws loyal shoppers from south of Toronto to Barrie and farther north.

Having learned how to make wine as



a child at her father's knee, it's really no surprise that she ended up in this field. Born and raised in Winnipeg, Michele fondly remembers spending those long, harsh winters helping her father as he made wine and other beverages in the basement, watching closely and always learning. She loved it when he prepared homemade root beer, often drinking a

whole jug of it herself. But it was the wine that really fascinated her. She and her brother and sister were always allowed to sample a bit of the wine at Sunday dinner and her palate was conditioned at a very young age.

Though she had a happy childhood in Winnipeg, Michele admits she's always hated the cold and was eager to move away one day. She initially planned to study law at the University of Manitoba but decided she didn't have the fortitude to do the work required. Instead, she studied political science, but it was her job in the hospitality industry (she worked full time as a student to pay her own way) that really piqued her interest. After graduation, she decided on a career in the hotel business, moving from the front desk to planning the conferences and overseeing the catering side.

It was while working there that she





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## Retail Profile: Yonge Street Winery



met her future husband, Dennis. Dennis had already started his career in financial services when they married. He was ambitious from the start and when his company offered him a plum position in Toronto in 1986, Michele felt it was their big chance to break away from Winnipeg. By then, she was working in the courier/trucking business and though she didn't have a job waiting in Toronto, she quickly found work in the transportation field, where she remained for several years.

It was when the couple embarked on a 24-hour return trip to Winnipeg in 1996 that her husband was able to get her thinking about starting her own business. Well aware of Michele's love for – and knowledge of – wine, Dennis suggested she open a craft wine-making shop. At the time, there were plenty of places selling home kits, and horrible stores filled with chemicals sitting on shelves, but true craft wine-making (in barrels) was still in its infancy. By the time they returned, Michele had warmed to the idea and started planning.

Her initial vision was of a quaint little general store where she would sweep the front sidewalk every morning. The reality was she didn't know the first thing about retailing, so she signed up for a six-week entrepreneurial course. At the end, she had to come up with a

business plan to present to the banks. The Bank of Nova Scotia turned her down but TD liked her idea and agreed to give her the business loan. She was one of only two people in the class who succeeded in getting a loan.

In 1996, at the age of 33, Michele took that loan, cashed in her RRSPs, and started sourcing locations in Richmond Hill, an affluent suburb north of Toronto. (Michele and Dennis had settled a few miles to the north of that, in Aurora.) Following the advice of a fellow student who was a traffic planner, Michele sat in parking lots all over the city, watching and learning.

"I noticed that young mothers needed wine more than most people so I figured a store near an M&M Meat Shop would be a good idea," she says.

After selecting an ideal plaza, she discovered another company had already leased the space and they also planned to open a wine-making store. Michele then opted to move closer to home and found the perfect spot, a 1000-square-foot site right on Yonge Street in Aurora.

After devouring the book *The Profitable Retailer* by Doug Fleener, and absorbing as much as she could, Michele felt confident she knew what she was doing. But there were two things that kept Michele and Dennis up at night after signing the lease in the spring of

The original Yonge Street Winery is the first store most people enter. Customers can make a variety of craft wines with the expert help of Michele and her husband Dennis, below.



1996. They knew they had to move fast in order to get listed in the telephone book (a necessity in those days), and they needed a name for the business. The one they originally had chosen, *Great Canadian Wine Company*, was taken so on the spur of the moment, they came up with *Yonge Street Winery*.

"It was a bit of a risk because it meant we could never move away from Yonge Street," she recalls, "but I felt the street was long enough, and familiar enough, that it would work."

That summer, she and Dennis started building their store from scratch. Michele installed the hardwood floor

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## Retail Profile: Yonge Street Winery

herself on her hands and knees. They painted the walls dark green and built the front counter out of reclaimed barn boards. When they opened in September, it looked just like the old-fashioned general store of Michele's dreams.

The response from the community was immediate. Michele can still remember the excitement of greeting her first customers, two women who walked through the door five minutes after she opened. They spent \$400, and both are still customers to this day.

Within months, Michele had exceeded all the numbers in her business plan and was thrilled with her decision. Friends helped out on the weekends so she wouldn't get lonely and she gradually started to add more products to enhance the wine-making section. Reluctant to invest too much in wine accessories initially, Michele had most of her inventory on display in the front half of the store and would get nervous if a customer bought too many of any one item.

Gradually, she expanded into more glassware plus decanters and gourmet foods such as jams made with wine. Her customers knew they could depend on Michele to guide them in the right direction, whatever their needs.

"Perhaps it was my father's influence but I'm unusual in that I've always preferred a big, bold red wine," she says. "I never went through the sweet or white wine phase, though most of my customers drink Pinot Grigio."

In 2000, Michele decided she wanted to partner with Riedel, recognized as a world leader in stemware, but their rep had no interest in selling to her. Michele waited a year and tried again, convincing them that her store was 'the northern version of The Wine Establishment', a popular retailer in downtown Toronto. The Riedel rep finally relented after visiting her store and Michele was ecstatic.

The minimum starting order was \$2,000 so that was how much she spent. When a small Riedel carton arrived a few days later, Michele was horrified. "I thought, oh my God, maybe this wasn't my greatest idea ever."

Undeterred, she put out the two ex-

pensive decanters and the six sets of glasses and hoped for the best. It all sold within a week. Michele knew she was on to something and by 2001, when the lease expired, she was ready to grow. They started looking for a new location and soon found the perfect spot. For someone selling wine and cocktail accessories, it was ideally situated in a

plaza across from an LCBO store (provincial liquor store). Though it wasn't directly on Yonge Street, it was on a corner of it, and just down the road from where Michele and Dennis lived.

They quickly moved into the new store and spent most of the money on the signage. Within a few months, the next door neighbor decided to downsize



Stems - The Riedel Store has dark walls and a carpeted floor to make customers more comfortable. A fully-stock bar with wine fridge adorns one wall, below. Georg Riedel himself officially approved of Michele's displays, above left. Above right, two exquisite decanters from Riedel, the Double Magnum Amadeo (it holds three litres of wine) and the snakelike Titanoboa (only 500 were made).



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## Retail Profile: Yonge Street Winery

and Michele approached the landlord to see if they could take the space. He agreed, so they cut through the wall and created an innovative 'walk-through' into a new area away from the wine-producing barrels. From the outside, it looked like two stores, but inside the two spaces flowed freely together.

The new store was incorporated as a separate company and they selected the

name *Stems*. Then, as an afterthought, Michele added *The Riedel Store*. She wasn't sure if this was possible, but as an eternal optimist, she took the chance.

Georg Riedel was not amused, but when he visited Canada the next year, he made of point of stopping by the store. He arrived with great fanfare and was greeted warmly by Michele, who eagerly showed him around. He was

overjoyed, saying "this is exactly how my boxes were meant to be displayed, you've merchandised them perfectly".

Relieved, Michele signed a licensing agreement (though no money exchanged hands) and today, there are only a handful of Riedel stores in the world, including Michele's and the one in Austria where the company has had a factory for 250 years.

From the moment Michele moved into the new space, sales skyrocketed. She only had a tenth of the inventory she carries today, but her clever merchandising and retail appeal kept customers coming back. Those customers were mostly men and the store catered to their needs with leather club chairs, dark colours and a relaxing interior.

"We found there were groups of men who would meet up at Canadian Tire in the morning looking at sump pumps and an hour later they'd be in our store looking at beautiful (and very expensive) Riedel decanters," says Michele.

Often, these men are the wine experts in the family but they actually know much less than they'll acknowledge. That's where Michele and her staff come in. They pride themselves on their ability to educate customers at all levels.

As time went by, staff discovered that the men who were into high quality glasses and premium wines were the type who also loved to entertain and show off their culinary skills on the weekend. As Michele explains: "These guys didn't cook every night, but on Saturday, they wanted to take over the kitchen and replicate all these great dishes they saw on *Iron Chef*, and serve it with a great wine they'd made themselves. We realized that we should expand into serious kitchen tools targeted at these weekend warriors so we brought in chef's jackets and gourmet knives."

In 2009, a second neighbor vacated the plaza and Michele was on the move again, knocking down another wall to create *Vineyard Kitchen*. She didn't know anything about retailing when she started, and she says she sure didn't know anything about kitchenware when she opened the third store. But she quickly

The kitchen store features pale walls and dark laminate wood floors with white wood accents. Initially designed to appeal to their male customers, the store has attracted an entirely new female audience.

Below, these cutting boards are hand crafted from wine barrels.



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## Retail Profile: Yonge Street Winery

decided that the logical place to start was with existing suppliers. She felt “the best customers are the ones we already have. We knew that our clients can only buy so many decanters and wine fridges. We needed to have more things to keep their interest.”

Leaning on reps from a core group of partners that included Royal Selangor, Swissmar and Trudeau, Michele was surprised to find the store attracted an entirely new customer base, made up primarily of female shoppers. In the past, women would occasionally come into the shop with a recommendation from their husband, or a page torn from a magazine. Now they were enticed by a tantalizing array of tableware and gourmet gadgets, many with a wine theme, including beautiful cutting boards crafted from wooden barrels.

Each store, though linked, has a distinctive interior that sets it apart and Michele’s passion for good food and fine wine comes through in everything she does. She doesn’t just ‘greet’ her customers, she ‘welcomes’ them into her store, insisting there is a difference. Lit-

tle wonder customers feel right at home shortly after arrival, enjoying a complimentary coffee or the warmth of a roaring fire as the wine infuses the atmosphere with a rich, fragrant aroma.

Michele, with her magnanimous personality, is the main attraction, of course. A born entertainer, she’s not only very smart but possesses a delightfully dry wit. When asked if she caters to an affluent demographic, she responds with a straight face, “well, if you closed off our parking lot and only allowed white Mercedes SUVs, our sales would probably decline by just 10%”.

With three stores totalling 3,000 square feet, it didn’t take long for the barware/kitchenware sales to exceed sales in the ‘urban winery’, as Michele likes to call it. Today, it’s split 60/40 wares vs. wine. There are three full time staff, each of whom is guaranteed a 40-hour work week. They benefit from Michele’s expertise, training and enthusiasm and those who have left the company often stay in touch and help out when they can. Even Dennis has seen the light and come on board.



Michele’s full-time employees include Amanda Bacci, Tyler Andersen and Lisa Sauve.

A few years ago, Michele considered selling the Riedel line herself to restaurants but realized she couldn’t spare the time. Instead, she convinced her husband to leave his job in downtown Toronto and join her. Today, Michele says Dennis has become a “sales manager extraordinaire’. He calls on restaurants, professional chefs and resorts such as Taboo in Muskoka or Trout Point Lodge in the Maritimes.

Michele still does all of the buying for the three stores and though they have an active web site and do sell their products online, she insists customers need to actually come into the store to appreciate how special an experience it is. Her suppliers, most of whom adore her, agree wholeheartedly (see sidebar).

This past August, she and Dennis had an opportunity to visit Australia and tour the Riedel factory as well as several wineries. “I thought I knew everything there was to know about glassware but I learned so much,” Michele says. “Now I know why lead crystal is more expensive – and why it’s worth it.”

Sharing her wine expertise is something Michele does happily. She is completely self-taught and has contemplated taking courses to get her sommelier designation, if she ever finds the time. As nice as it would be to taste a wine and be able to determine where the grape was grown, Michele already has a good sense of how to service her cus-



A centre island in the Vineyard Kitchen shop showcases the latest cookbooks and gadgets.

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### High praise for Michele Hirst from suppliers

Michele brings a terrific personal dynamic to retail. Her marketing and retail presentation have made the store a destination for the discerning professional home chef. Michele's bubbly personality and background as an acclaimed "winemaker", together with her professional experience in the hospitality industry, are clearly evident when you walk through the front doors.

A further interesting dynamic is the partnership of her husband Dennis. He brings a corporate executive perspective that balances Michele's passion for specialized independent retail. Dennis has his own success story to tell after building a highly specialized marketing and distribution business servicing the professional private clubs across Canada. In fact, some of the best advertising for our retail brands is having these products used by chefs in high end restaurants and clubs.

Michele and Dennis are a pleasure to know and to work with.

#### **Bob Burke, Royal Selangor**

I think one of Michele's key strengths is her ability block out the noise and focus on her own business. She's not always looking over her shoulder to see what the competition is doing, nor is she a "me-too" thinker. Her business began with a very specific point of view, and by keeping focused on those core strengths, she has built a solid reputation as the 'go to' source for wine related products in the area. With the opening of the Vineyard Kitchen, she's now also becoming known as a source for really interesting and unique kitchen tools.

She is fantastic with customers, and really knows her stuff! I don't know of any other retailer who has such an extensive knowledge about food & wine – varietals, growing regions, flavour profiles, cooking styles – and can distill this into a simple and informative explanation for her customers so they can make the best product selection(s) for their taste.

The store has a welcoming environment and completely service oriented. Customers are greeted upon entering (often by name), and purchases are recorded for future reference. If you don't remember what glass you bought, the staff at YSW will. Gift wrapping is free, and corporate gifts are a specialty. Displays are changed frequently, and Michele occasionally works with a consultant to get a fresh assessment of the store layout and displays. Her staff are hired based on their personality traits rather than on specific knowledge of wine or retail. Michele believes she can teach employees about wine, glassware and housewares, but she can't teach someone how to have a personality! She will go to great lengths to support and retain exceptional staff.

As a buyer, she is focused and straightforward. If she likes an item, you know. If she doesn't like it, you know. Those who provide her with great service and current information will be successful and develop a solid, long term retail partnership. She is not a demanding buyer but she is professional and straightforward and expects the same courtesy from suppliers. Most of all, she is ALWAYS upbeat and has a "glass half full" mentality. It seems that there are no challenges in her world, only opportunities waiting.

#### **Rhonda Symons, David Shaw Designs**

I have great respect for Michele as a retailer. She absolutely knows her customers and what they want. The store is lovely to shop in and her customers receive good attention without feeling sales pressure. Michele and her staff always make customers feel like they are welcome in her store.

I think one of Michele's greatest strengths is hiring upbeat, personable, enthusiastic staff. The product knowledge can come later (and Michele does a good job of teaching that), but enthusiasm can't necessarily be taught. I think she also takes advantage of any special skills her staff might have and encourages them to shine. Her store always seems like a happy place to be.

I enjoy working with Michele. She is also cheerful, pleasant and always professional.

#### **Chris O'Neil, Swissmar**

tomers and she has a keen sense of coming trends. She was one of the first in the country to carry whiskey stones and Govino glasses and is constantly searching for innovative items online.

In addition to offering good advice to her many male customers on a daily basis, the store also holds special events for women's groups in the area. Michele can accommodate up to 25 people for private shopping nights where they'll serve food and offer free gift wrapping.

At home, Michele and Dennis both enjoy a good wine in the evening, and often have six bottles open at any given time. On the weekends, they love to wine and dine friends at their cottage on Stoney Lake. Presently, the store is closed on Sunday and Monday, allowing them to get away each weekend. (They also spend a couple of weeks in Florida each winter.) With the stores drawing interest from such a vast region, however, Michele is considering opening Mondays in the near future. She hates to think someone might drive all the way from Oakville on a Monday only to find out they were closed.

Otherwise, there are no plans for expansion. This child of a wine-maker has already seen her dream come true, earning her father's praise and pride along the way. Her parents, who still live in Winnipeg, come to visit Michele and Dennis at their cottage every summer and have shared many good bottles of wine together. He'll bring her jars of homemade dill pickles and says that if he lived closer, he would want to work part time in her store.

Looking back on all she's achieved in the past 20 years, Michele is overjoyed that she has been able to make a living sharing her knowledge and doing something she loves. She usually prefers a bold red wine from France, but she has set aside a very special bottle of 1996 Dom Perignon that she will open the day their annual sales surpass \$1 million. With the way things are going, that day should arrive very soon. In the meantime, Michele is happy to enjoy the fruits of her labour and, like any fine wine, take the time to breathe. ☺

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# Family tree

As the owners of three distinct retail businesses in Sherwood Park, Alberta, Cathy Slobodian and her daughter Natalie demonstrate that it is possible to successfully mix business and family

By Denise Gaze

What is the best way to find the perfect business partner to help you open up a kitchen store? You give birth to her. At least that's what Cathy Slobodian did in 1975, when daughter Natalie was born. Not that she knew at the time what the future would hold. Today, 39 years later, Natalie Nelson and her mom are the proud owners of The Pan Tree kitchen store in the Millennium Ridge Shopping Mall in Sherwood Park, Alberta.

The Pan Tree is actually three shops in one location. Although they occupy the same space, they operate as separate departments. There is Baskets in the Park, a very successful business specializing in corporate gift baskets. There is a jewellery boutique and women's accessories section and then the kitchen shop, which opened in 2012. In the large, 5,000-square-foot space, the kitchen shop occupies 1,500 square feet, carrying approximately 2,800 SKUs. All three businesses offer online shopping and ship items across Canada.

The inspiration began in 2001 when Cathy, who had always wanted to own her own business, bought an existing gift basket business, Baskets in the Park. She left her job at ATCO, a utilities and energy company in Alberta where she handled a number of different administration positions for 20 years, to fulfill her dream of becoming her own boss.

"When my mom's business really started to grow, I started helping out on weekends in 2004," says Natalie, who herself is now a mother to three children, two daughters and a son, ranging in age from three to seventeen.

Going into retail with her mom was not Natalie's original life plan. With a passion for animals, Natalie graduated from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology with a diploma in Animal Health. She worked as an animal health technician for several years, but as

Cathy's business continued to grow, "she needed me more often" recalls Natalie, and a partnership was born.

With Natalie on board, they were able to expand an already thriving enterprise. They decided to open a housewares shop complete with a chef's kitchen for demonstrations, cooking classes and customer participation classes. The Pan Tree's kitchen offers fun themed classes such as the Robbie Burns Day cooking class, which offers a menu complete with Haggis and Scotch eggs.



Natalie Nelson, left, and her mom, Cathy Slobodian, say they have found the perfect partnership.

## Retail Profile: The Pan Tree



The Pan Tree kitchen shop, one of three retail businesses in one location, occupies 1,500 square feet and offers almost 3,000 SKUs. Many of the gourmet products are sourced locally from Canadian suppliers.



Each department in the business has its own staff. Four employees work in The Pan Tree, six in jewellery and women's accessories, and one other staff member, along with Cathy, handle Baskets in the Park. Cathy also handles the financial aspect of the three businesses.

For Baskets in the Park, Cathy seeks out Canadian products, which consist primarily of gourmet foods as well as bath and body products. Cathy does all the buying for the baskets and usually tries the products herself first. She recently found four new Canadian suppliers with excellent products but also will try to include some European products to create an interesting mix of food and gift items.

You would think running three businesses in one location would be tough on any relationship, but nothing could be further from the truth in this case for these two entrepreneurs.

"I love working with my daughter," says Cathy. "If you had a partner that was just a friend, you might not be able to solve all problems. But because she is my daughter, we *have* to work things out. I just love it."

Operating out of a strip mall in a brand new area of Sherwood Park, Natalie and Cathy have purchased their building. It has turned out to be a good investment as Millennium Ridge is becoming a destination shopping mall. "There are a lot of new restaurants nearby that have helped send customers our way on their lunch hour," says Natalie.

Natalie does all the buying for The Pan Tree and judging by the gorgeous interior, she has a very good eye.

"For kitchen products, I look for quality and functionality. Our best selling categories are gadgets and cookware," says Natalie. "I really enjoy my working relationship with the suppliers."

Bill Marshall of Zwilling remembers "I met Natalie a long time prior to her opening The Pan Tree. I would describe our relationship as a partnership. She is always open to new ideas. Her enthusiasm and cheerfulness makes it an enjoyable sales call."

Both Natalie and her mom share a

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## Retail Profile: The Pan Tree



strong work ethic and a love of retail. They work hard to give the customer a wonderful shopping experience when they come through the door.

"We pride ourselves on making customers feel welcome, and on our extensive product knowledge," says Natalie. "We want our store to look good and be inviting. With the in-store kitchen, we are fortunate to be able to demonstrate any product we carry."

With no background in retail prior to joining her mom, Natalie believes experience is not the only thing that counts in this industry. "You have to love what you do," she says. "You can't fake passion for something. Even though I was thrown into the trenches, so to speak, I liked retailing right away."

The Pan Tree has only been open for two years, but Natalie is a realist about their expectations. "I would advise any new retailer to be persistent," she says. "So many people get discouraged in their first year. You need to be passionate and determined to stick with it."

Learning from a great role model – her own mother – is Natalie's secret to



The beautiful full service kitchen in the store offers cooking classes and product demonstrations on a regular basis. Many of the students become regular customers.

success. "The best lesson I have learned from her in business is determination," she says. "Even when times are tough, my mom has always persisted in taking our business to the next level with a 'never give up' attitude," she notes.

Natalie continually puts into practice all she has learned by constantly challenging herself. She has created a working environment that her employees enjoy. "People like to work here, we are a family-oriented business and we are close to our staff," says Natalie.

"Natalie is a pleasure to deal with," according to Oliver Janousek of Octagon Marketing. "I first met her a few

years ago at the gift show when The Pan Tree was still only a set of architectural drawings. Natalie is a great supporter of the brands she carries and is always enthusiastic about new items."

There is the usual big box store competition nearby, but that does not concern Natalie.

"Having an in-store kitchen gives us a competitive edge," she explains. "We have five chefs on board who offer both hands-on and demonstration classes within the store. We find the cooking classes have really helped to bring people in the door." Natalie also promotes the store through advertising in her

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## Retail Profile: The Pan Tree

local newspaper as well as on social media.

Though Natalie has always had a good relationship with her suppliers, she feels it has become even better since opening the kitchen store.

"Natalie and her staff are wonderful to work with," says Brenda Poffenroth, agent for Port Style Enterprises and Browne. "She is always there with a ready smile and has a great sense of humour. I really enjoyed seeing her vision unfold over the past two years. Natalie has stayed true to her dream, tweaking things here and there on occasion but always following the course she originally set. The demo kitchen that she built is spectacular to work in."

Having a great relationship with the suppliers is one thing, but the most important relationship contributing to The Pan Tree's success is the one between mother and daughter. "We have a great bond, we work well together and balance out each other's strengths and weaknesses," says Natalie.

They are so close, in fact, that many of Natalie's long-term goals revolve around her mom's future plans "My mom is thinking of retiring," she laments. "Mom wants to move to British Columbia but I don't want her to leave. I am currently pondering whether I can keep this store and run the business from another province."

Natalie is also considering the possibility of opening another store in British Columbia, if she chooses to follow her parents there. A tough decision lies

ahead for both Natalie and Cathy. British Columbia's gain would be Sherwood Park's loss as mom and daughter have regularly given back to their community with events like an annual chili cook-off. The cook-off helps raise money for The Kids with Cancer Society by pitting the local Fire Department against the RCMP. Together they battle it out in The Pan Tree's gorgeous kitchen to see who can create the best chili.

"We figured firefighters knew their way around a kitchen" say Natalie. "When we approached them, they were so receptive because they already had a friendly rivalry going on."

The Kids with Cancer Society holds a special place in Natalie and Cathy's heart as Natalie's niece recently went through treatment. They saw first hand just how much the organization helps.

When Natalie is not juggling three different businesses, and the 'best business partner' she has ever had retires, she may consider opening another business for herself. Her ultimate dream is to run a bed and breakfast. She loves to cook and working out of her own home would be ideal.

"In ten years I envision myself working and living in the Okanagan valley in beautiful British Columbia," she says.

Generally, the consensus is you should not mix family and business, but in the case of Natalie Nelson and her mom Cathy, it has been the perfect combination.

Natalie tells *Home Style*: "The greatest life lesson I learned from my mom is the



importance of family. Throughout my life, my mom has always made an effort to ensure our family was together, not only for special occasions, but in hard times as well. No matter what the circumstance, our family knows we will always be there for each other."

As Natalie ponders what her future holds, it's still not clear whether she will open another kitchen store in a new province, or start preparing culinary feasts in her own bed and breakfast inn. No matter what comes next, she knows she will always have the valuable lessons she learned from her mother in business – and in life. And someday, as her own children grow, Natalie may have to look no further than her son and daughters when it comes time to find her next great business partner. ☺

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# Cool Kitchen Tools

*What's new in kitchen tools and gourmet gadgets*



The Cuisipro mini pop mold collection from **Browne**, above, comes in several fun character designs, including farm animals, dinosaurs and a safari set. Each features a patented snap-fit connection design. They're made of BPA-free, food-safe, non-reactive material. Also new from Cuisipro is a new V Grater collection with surface glide technology. The line includes three stainless steel graters and three rasps, below, with non-slip bands and protective covers.



The Bagel Slicing Guide from **Trudeau**, right, has an outer ring that turns to safely adjust and slice any bagel to a desired thickness. It can be cut in half or in multiple layers. The anti-skid base insures stability. It comes apart easily for cleaning and can go safely in the dishwasher.



**Cuisinar's** new Multi-Prep Bowl features a five-quart stainless steel mixing bowl with silicone bottom for non-slip mixing, three discs for fine grating, coarse shredding and precise slicing and a plastic lid for storage. It allows users to prep, mix and store all ingredients.



**Abbott** is introducing these convenient multi-blade herb snips. They are available in several sizes and are designed to make meal preparation faster and easier. They also feature a stem stripper.



The OXO food scale from **Danesco** has a handy pull-out display, above. It weighs items directly on the platform, in a plate or a bowl. The display features large, easy-to-read numbers and the plastic platform can be removed for cleaning.



The ThermoBaste from **Joseph Joseph** features a leave-in meat and poultry thermometer with roasting gauge. The thermometer and cleaning brush fit right inside the baster for compact storage. Available from Danesco.



Also from Joseph Joseph, the Multi-peel line includes four general purpose peelers paired with complimentary scraping and potato-eye remover and blade guard. The ergonomic handles are easy to grip. Available in straight, serrated or Y-blade.

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# Cool Kitchen Tools

Get a grip on hot cookware with Handle Hands. They are available in two sizes and offered in six colours to match any décor. Just clip the silicone-lined Handle Hand to any hot two-handled pot, oven rack or cookie sheet and then press together to secure. Available from **Danica**.



Staybowlizer from Danica is a welcome replacement for placing a damp towel under a skidding bowl. Staybowlizer secures all sizes of bowls by suction locking onto a counter. You can mix, whisk and whip while keeping one hand free to add ingredients. Staybowlizer also acts as a double boiler by marrying an existing bowl a saucepan. Staybowlizer is heat resistant to 260°C/500°F and is oven, microwave and dishwasher safe.



Households will use up to 60% fewer paper towels with the wet/dry Counter-top Wiper from **Jascor**. It will easily wipe or scrape crumbs or liquids onto a tray or into the sink. Available in red or grey.



**Fox Run Brands** introduces Claude, the cookbook and touch tablet companion. This adorable recipe holder is designed to fit tablets, cookbooks and magazines



Easy-to-hold and easy-to-use, the **Linden Sweden** Jonas click and clean garlic press eliminates the challenge of cleaning a traditional press. Fabricated from polyamide plastic, it has a sturdy and durable metal grate. To use, simply click the press open and insert a clove, then click to close and press down on the handle. It features self-contained cleaning spikes that remove any garlic remains inside the grid.



Seal & Pour from Linden Sweden clips to any bag to create an instant pouring spout. The flip-top lid seals tightly to ensure the contents remain fresh. It works on any bag – paper or plastic. Linden Sweden products are distributed by **David Shaw Designs**.





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# Cool Kitchen Tools



Users can safely slice bagels evenly every time with the Joie Bagel Slicer from **MSC International**. The guide arms fold for easy storage. It's available in green or red. Also from MSC, this tomato knife sharpener (offered in an onion version as well), provides a smooth precise slice. It uses a ceramic slicing mechanism.



The Swedish BBQ knife tool is a dream for all BBQ enthusiasts. Available from **Sagaform**, it works as a compact folding tool and includes a silicone marinade brush, a serrated knife, a turner with a built in bottle opener and a BBQ fork. When folded it measures 11.5-inch and is perfect for tailgating and picnics as well as the backyard.



The 'Cheesy Set' from Boska's Pro Collection features a 13 x 9-inch slate cheese board combined with the company's best selling cheese knife. All Boska tools come with a 10-year guarantee. Made from quality stainless steel, they are also dishwasher-safe. From **Royal Selangor**.



The Smart Sealer from **Salton** seals virtually anything in its original bag. It has a built-in bag cutter that opens sealed bags or cuts off excess before sealing. A handy magnetic back keeps the sealer ready to use on the refrigerator.



The 3-in1 dessert maker/slicer/grater from Salton can easily slice, shred and grind cheese, fruit, vegetables or nuts. The compact design allows for easy storage. It has a continuous on switch and the removable parts are dishwasher-safe.



The Final Touch stainless steel rechargeable electric corkscrew from **Product Specialties** removes a cork in seconds with the touch of a button. The lithium-ion battery provides a longer battery life and slower self-discharge when left unused. It opens up to 40 bottles when fully charged. It can also recharge on the go with a Micro-USB cord. Blue LED lights illuminate when charging or in use.



**Swissmar** continues its partnership with World Champion Oyster Shucker, Patrick McMurray, above. This all-in-one shucking and serving set was designed specifically with oysters in mind. The wooden puck is used to safely shuck oysters contain the mess. The ceramic sauce dish and tray are an elegant way to serve freshly shucked delights. The tray is also oven safe.

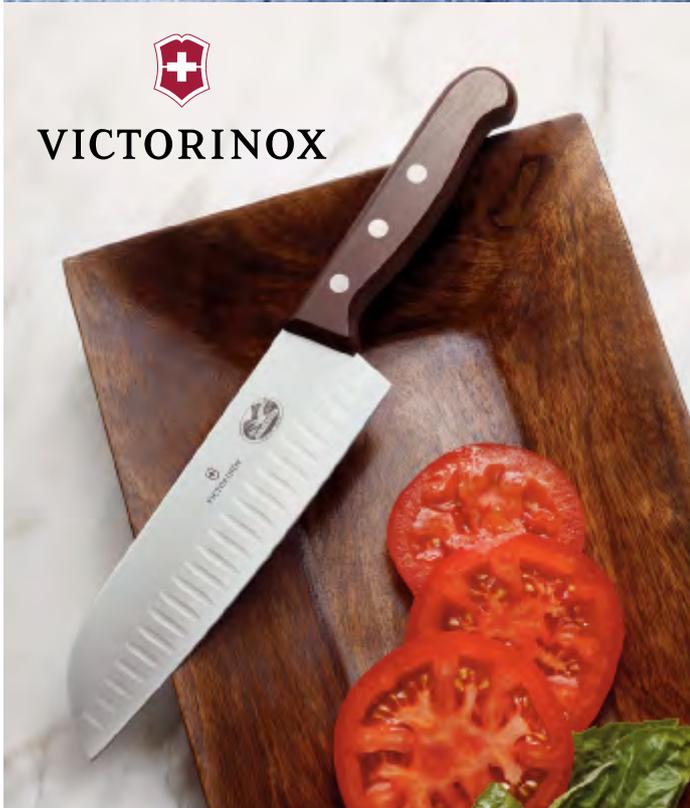
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# Time for Tea

*The latest trends in tea pots, infusers and kettles*

## A trend is brewing as electric kettle sales heat up at the high end

by Dave Adamchick, Account Manager, The NPD Group

As soon as the leaves start changing colour and the kids are back in school, it's time for another season. In Canada, that's kettle season. Unlike many other small appliance categories that peak in the holiday season when they're sold as gift items, kettle sales are highest in September. I suspect this is driven by cooler weather, which leads people to gravitate to warm drinks, plus cold and flu season ramping up. But there are also college and university students heading back to school, where you will likely find a kettle in a dorm room.

Kettles are often listed as a dorm room essential (try Googling "kettle in dorm") and for good reason. They are very versatile – able to prepare everything from a Kraft Dinner, to tea, coffee, hot chocolate, instant soups, noodles, and instant oatmeal. Most of these tasks can be done with any kettle that boils water, but there is a trend of growth in higher priced kettles with features not available at the lower price points. These higher-priced kettles offer options such as settings to customize the temperature of the water to the type of tea being made, or even a basket that automatically lowers tea leaves into the hot water when the temperature is optimal, and then removes the leaves to avoid over-steeping. Anecdotally you can see the growth of tea in consumer mindshare from the growth in prominence of tea shops and chains such as David's Tea or Teavana. It would appear that some of these serious tea drinkers are having an impact on kettle sales and trends.

Overall, the market for kettles grew by 2%, but sales of kettles priced higher than \$60 grew 23% versus last year and now account for more than 16% of the total dollar share in kettles. This drove the average selling price for the total kettle category up 7% compared to last year. Furthermore, while half of the unit volume is driven by kettles priced under \$20, total revenue in this price point declined by more than 14%.

Conversely, the strongest growth came from kettles priced over \$140. Glass and stainless kettles are also where much of the growth is concentrated, typically materials that are found in higher priced kettles or those sold in kitchen shops.

Growth at the high-end is not a trend that is isolated to kettles. It's also occurring in other categories in the kitchen where technology is having a tremendous impact. Consumers seem to be willing to spend more in their homes for the full-featured devices they use every day, even in a mature category like electric kettles.



This **Salton** stainless steel kettle and tea steeper boils or heats water to the perfect temperature. It features four pre-set temperatures and an audible signal when the water reaches the pre-set temperature. A keep warm function maintains temperature for 30 minutes while the 360° cordless base allows for left or right hand use. It includes two lids, one for a standard kettle and one for steeping tea.



The **Breville** IQ Kettle Pure, above, is designed for people who appreciate a properly steeped cup of tea. Users can choose from five different variable settings to brew at the perfect temperature. It has a soft opening lid that slowly releases steam and prevents splashing. The kettle automatically turns off and has a keep warm function to keep the water at the precise temperature for up to 20 minutes.

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# Time for Tea



London Pottery Geo teapots from **Now Designs**, above, offers a classically modern design with a familiar rounded body, angular handle and no-drip spout. They're available in a 2-cup or 4-cup size in an array of vibrant colours. Moroccan Tile collection from Now Designs, right, features beautiful motifs with gorgeous glazes covering embossed designs of Moorish patterns.



**Cuisivin** will be promoting the Dualit line of fine tea capsules this spring. The line includes an exceptional range of tea blends as well as infusions with Dualit's Nespresso-compatible tea capsules. Dualit uses a taste-boosting breakthrough to extract the most flavour in seconds. The tea capsules flavor assortment includes English Breakfast, Earl Grey, Green, Blackcurrant and Peppermint blends.



**Paderno** is unveiling two new stovetop kettles for 2015. Both the West Bay and the Sunny Brae whistling kettles are crafted from durable 18/10 stainless steel and are designed to provide fast, even heat conduction on any type of stovetop.



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# Time for Tea



**MSC International** has launched a new Scoop, Steep and Stir tea infuser under the Joie brand. Made of 18/10 stainless steel, the infuser is easy to use and designed for compact storage in any drawer.



**Abbott** hopes to make tea time fun with an assortment of whimsical metal tea infusers. The collection includes an umbrella with umbrella stand, below left, an adorable grey hippo, below right, and a phone and phonebook stand (not shown).



**KitchenAid's** new kettle model KEK1222, below, is featured in brushed stainless steel for a modern look. It has an easy on/off switch and mirror finish pouring spout. The compact design features a stainless steel body, removable lid and removable base. The power base offers cord storage. This kettle also comes in empire red and onyx black.



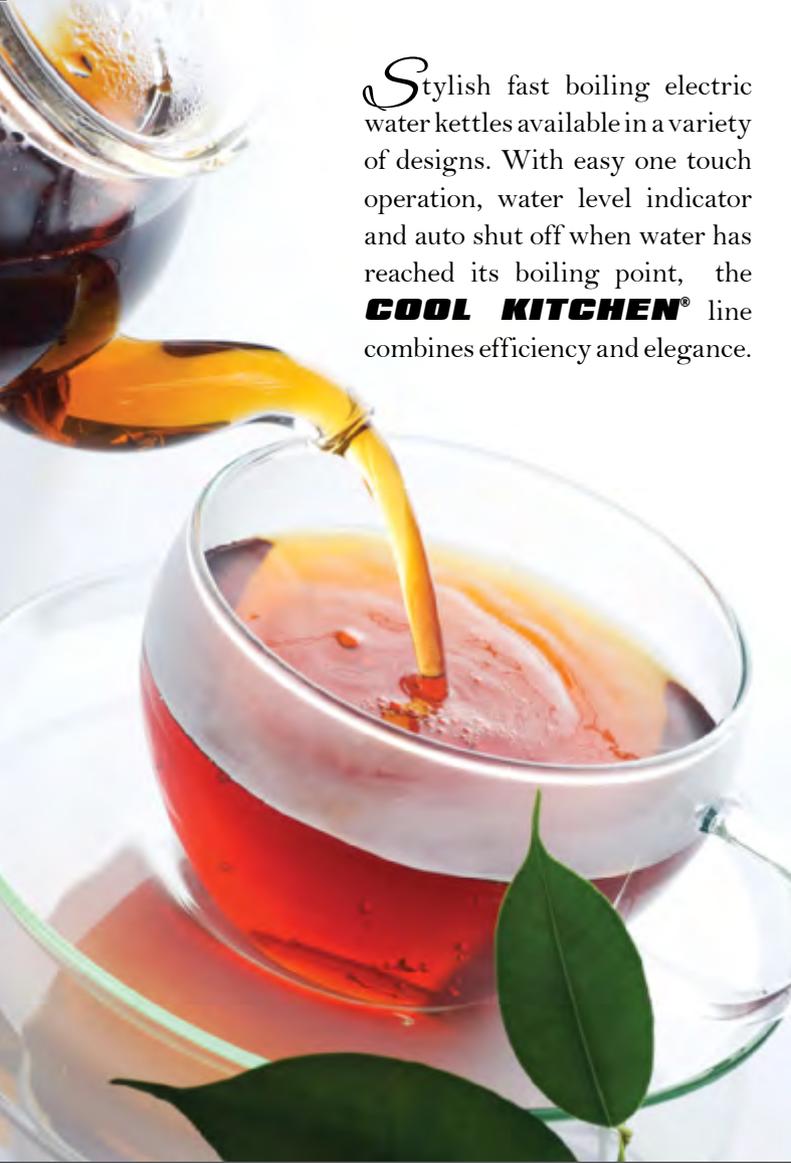
This striking new kettle from KitchenAid, above, is shown in candy apple red and features a temperature control, temperature gauge and water level gauge. The enduring design offers a traditional dome style with a dual wall construction and a large handle that is soft to the touch. Other features include a lid release button, cord wrap and removable base. Other colours include frosted pearl (white) onyx black and sugar pearl silver.



**Sevy** is introducing this cheery Flower Bloom floating tea infuser. It's available in either red or yellow and comes with an infuser holder. Simply fill the stainless steel infuser with loose tea and close the flower cover, immerse and let the Bloom float in boiling water and steep to taste.



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# Outdoor living

*Hot new products designed for al fresco dining*



The beautiful southwestern-inspired Santa Fe collection from **Abbott**, above, features bright colours and designs that pop. The tableware is offered in a variety of shapes for serving and dining, indoors or out. Each item is crafted from hardened dolomite for durability.



Shown left, Abbott's set of four Tint stemless goblets are made of long-lasting acrylic. They make it easy to enjoy cool drinks on a hot summer day and are offered in both warm and cool colours.

The Double-Wall 18/10 stainless steel beverage bin and stand from **Product Specialties** keeps ice frozen longer. It remains condensation-free during use and will not mark bar or tabletops. Hinged handles are designed to make lifting and carrying easy. The bin is perfect for indoor or outdoor usage. The stand is sold separately. It's made of commercial-grade 304 stainless steel with a mirror finish. It's also weighted at the base for increased stability.



The Acadia serving board with cover comes in two sizes from **Swissmar**. The acrylic dome keeps cheese and pastries covered and protected from the elements. The board is made from 100% richly grained dark wood and has non-slip gripper feet to protect countertops from scratches.





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# Outdoor living



The Galvanized line is part of Danesco's Urban Patio collection. Each piece is made from galvanized steel with rustic styling that helps make outdoor entertaining a relaxed, laid-back affair. There are five

pieces in the line. Also new is Urban Patio acrylic drinkware collection, below left, and melamine dinnerware, below. The durable glassware is offered in blue, green or clear with a ribbed panel design. The BPA-free melamine tableware, in blue or green, has the appearance of glazed ceramic for worry-free entertaining.



Environmentally sustainable and naturally biodegradable, each reusable Ecologie component is made from a food-safe material consisting of crushed bamboo and rice husks. Distributed by **Danica**, the Ecologie collection, in red or blue, includes matching plates, tumblers, salad bowls, chip n dip bowls and segmented lunch trays.



The Mason jar is the hottest trend in drinkware this season. **Port-Style Enterprises** is showcasing this iconic jar as a complete set of four including four lids, four red and white straws and an easy carry metal rack to deliver cool drinks in style.



The Afternoon Delight tray from **The Wooden Palate** will add earthy elegance to any gathering. The extra wide hand made tray is made of black walnut with solid brass rail, handles and feet.

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# Toronto Gift Fair

January 25 to 29, 2015 • International Centre and Toronto Congress Centre

Throughout one million square feet of display space, the Toronto Gift Fair is Canada's largest temporary trade gift show. With over 1,800 exhibitors each year, it attracts nearly 24,000 retail buyers annually to see the latest in tabletop, housewares, gourmet food, garden accessories, collectibles, home décor, bath, bed and linen products and much more. Owned and managed by the Canadian Gift Association, the show is located at two key venues close to the airport, the International Centre and the Toronto Congress Centre, which features housewares in Hall 7.

The January show pays tribute to the gift industry's top vendors and retailers at the Sunday evening gala. This year's winning store was The Old Tin Shed, selected as Retailer of the Year. Accents for Living and Suite Dreams Home Emporium were also recognized as Retailers of Distinction.

CanGift's Supplier of the Year Award recognizes the importance of suppliers in the \$10 billion giftware industry. Specializing in fashion-forward and leading edge giftware,

Splash International Marketing takes the Award in the large category this year.

The winner of the medium category is Mississauga-based Stargazer Originals and byChance wins the 2014 Supplier of the Year Award in the small category.

Honourable mentions for the 2014 Supplier of the Year were awarded to: Enesco Canada Corporation (large); Grand International Trading (medium); and Ma's Kitchen (small).

Other winners include: Sales Representative of the Year (Independent) Laurel Owens; Sales Representative of the Year (Corporate) Clark Cooper; Sales Representative of the Year Honourable Mention (Independent) Rosy Loewith; and Sales Representative of the Year Honourable Mention (Corporate): Jacqueline Kent

We feature a few of the new housewares products that will be introduced at the January show on the following pages. Please refer to the CanGift on-site show directory for accurate exhibitor booth numbers (not available at press time).

## Toronto Gift Fair New Product Preview



Stop by the **Caffitaly** booth to see the new line of Delizioso ecaffè coffee capsules. This pure Arabica espresso has a sweet, subtle aroma and a reduced caffeine content.



Wonderfully soft, these super cute bibs can be used over and over and still look great. They're made with food grade silicone that is BPS, PVC and phalate-free and will be on display at the **Fox Run Brands** exhibit. The company is also showing the hot straw, below, designed specifically for hot beverages. The patented design fits securely onto plastic lids to prevent spills on the go.



# RICARDO COLLECTION

## Summertime essentials



*Set includes six products, including a pitcher, plates, bowls and salad servers.*



### 1 / 100% biodegradable serveware

Not only is this serveware made from renewable sources like wheat and sugar beet, but it is microwave and dishwasher safe. An industry first!

### 2 / Barbecue basket with removable handle

Perfect for everything from fish to vegetables, this non-stick basket holds food of all shapes and sizes securely for perfect results every time.



### 3 / Hamburger press

Making perfect burgers—or mini burgers!—is a breeze with this 2-in-1 set, which can also be used to make stuffed patties.



### 4 / Oven-ready skewer set

Rolling skewers are a thing of the past thanks to a clever square-notch design. This set of six comes oven-ready—just add your favourite food!



## Toronto Gift Fair New Product Preview



The new **Chef's Choice** Hybrid Angle Select Diamone Hone 290 knife sharpener will be introduced at the gift fair. It provides the most advanced technology using angled guides and 100% diamond abrasives in all three stages. The company will also unveil the Petite Pie maker 860, left. It quickly bakes four individual sized pies and features a precise digital timer and ready beeper.



Visit **Don Schacter**'s booth to see the new Citrus Zinger Sport spill-free hydration bottle from Zing Anything. It's available with a 'no-hands' straw and is perfect to sip water supercharged with lemon, lime or orange. It's convenient to carry and comes in five fun new colours.



**Counseltron** will exhibit a new combination of platters with wooden underliners by Lodge. The griddle is seasoned for a natural, easy release, which allows for heat retention and even cooking. Also new from Lodge is this Fajita Set. It can be used on all stovetops and includes an oval cast iron fajita griddle, a red-stained wooden underliner and a chili pepper handle mitt.



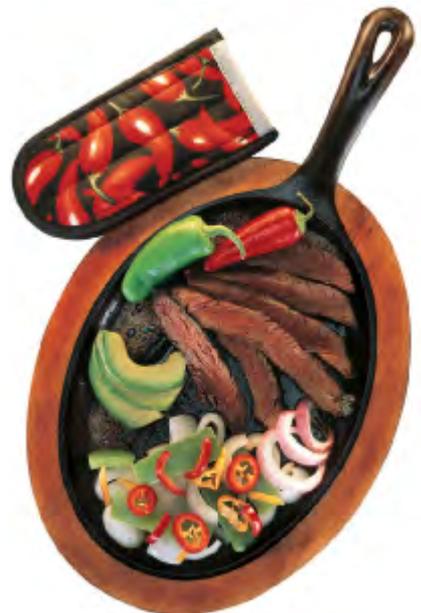
**Danica** will display a range of natural, compostable Swedish dishcloths made from 100% cotton and plant-based cellulose fibers, above. In addition, they'll feature the Moroccan tile collection of tableware featuring stamped, embossed bowls.



This new **WMF** 12-piece stainless steel steak knife and fork set is conveniently packaged in a storable wooden crate. The cutlery is made from patented Cromargan 18/10 stainless steel with contemporary styling. Each piece is beautifully crafted to fit comfortably in the hand and expertly cut meat without tearing.



The Boska 'Barbeclette' combines the best of BBQ and raclette. It includes an oak stand, cheese spatula and three tealights. Entertainers can prepare delicious melted cheese easily. Both Boska and WMF products are available from **Royal Selangor**.



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## Toronto Gift Fair New Product Preview



**Browne & Co.** will show several new Cuisipro items. This set of three mixing bowls feature a unique contoured shape for pouring. The bowls nest together for compact storage. Each one is made from durable, food-safe non-reactive material that is safe to put in the dishwasher.



The Cuisipro yogurt cheese maker, below uses a patented design to make creamy yogurt cheese at home using a uniquely-designed strainer. It's compact for easy storage and dishwasher-safe. The complete set consists of a BPA-free plastic container and stainless steel mesh strainer.



The **KitchenAid** Multi-Cooker offers over 10 cooking methods with four step-by-step cooking modes and EvenHeat technology. The four-quart pot has a CeramaShield non-stick coating. The cooker features assisted digital display, dual-purpose steam basket/roast rack and glass tempered lid.



New Canadian-made Granite pans will be launched by **Paderno** this spring. Featured on our cover, the pans are made of 18/10 stainless steel with a durable riveted handle, an encapsulated bottom pad that's safe for all stovetops, including induction, and a 25-year warranty. The non-stick coating has proven to last 10x longer than other competitive coatings. The pans feature a unique, protective "splatter" pattern that makes each one unique.



**David Shaw Designs** will show the Hasseback potato cutting board, left. The hollowed beechwood board allows potatoes to be thinly sliced but left joined at the bottom, based on an original Stockholm recipe. Also from David Shaw, the Bohemia Rainbow collection, right. Manufactured in the Czech Republic of lead-free crystalline, the line includes wine glasses, flutes, tumblers and shot glasses in six colours with fire-polished rims.



**Cuisivin** will exhibit the Pavoni lollipop mould, above. Made of 100% platinum silicone, each mould creates six fun lollipops. Available in cupcake and farm animal designs, each mould gift box includes 24 sticks and an inspirational recipe from traditional candy to sea salt infusions.



The three-in-one salad spinner from **Trudeau**, above, is ideal for berries, herbs and lettuce. It's easy to select the spinning speed and features a brake button that will stop the spinning in the blink of an eye. It has a retractable ergonomic knob and is dishwasher-safe.





ZWILLING  
J.A.HENCKELS

# NED'S HEAVY METAL

Ned Bell, Executive Chef of Four Seasons Hotel Vancouver and YEW seafood + bar, loves the solid feel and ergonomic handles of the induction-ready European-made ZWILLING® Sensation 5-ply cookware.



Discover ZWILLING J.A. HENCKELS at [www.zwilling.ca](http://www.zwilling.ca) and also at the ZWILLING® booth #7419 at the Toronto Gift Fair (Toronto Congress Centre)

## Toronto Gift Fair New Product Preview



The Market Fresh colander by Prepara will be featured at the **DanESCO** booth. The perfectly proportioned colander and serving bowl set lets users soak and rinse and then enjoy fresh berries or steamed veggies. A drip well prevents sogginess.

Made in Belgium, ZWILLING Aurora cookware combines functionality and elegant design. Five-ply body construction provides even heat distribution while 18/10 stainless steel enhances food's flavour. Polished handles provide stable control and contrast to the soft, brushed exterior. **Zwilling J.A. Henckels** also expands the Bob Kramer knife series with the Euro Essential line, hand-crafted in Japan.



Visit **Product Specialties** to see the latest in beverage ware. These stainless steel coffee cups feature double wall construction for superior insulation. The exterior stays temperature neutral so they're easy to handle. The cups come in three sizes, or sets of two.

This folding raclette from **Swissmar** is collapsible and portable for use on the patio or picnic. It's powered by three tealight candles.

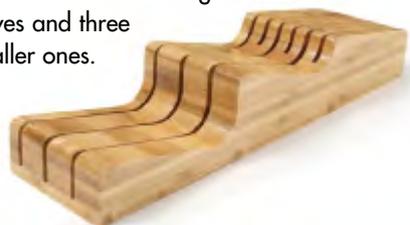


Also from Swissmar, the Duet II dual fondue and butter warmer set, left, is perfect for dipping fruit in chocolate. It's also ideal as a butter warmer for a romantic seafood dinner for two. The set includes two ceramic dipping bowls with a bamboo base and two forks.



Product Specialties will also launch a new stainless steel wine chiller with removable freezer packs. It keeps pre-chilled bottles cold for up to three hours. The top slides up and off for easy removal of the four gel packs (included with the set).

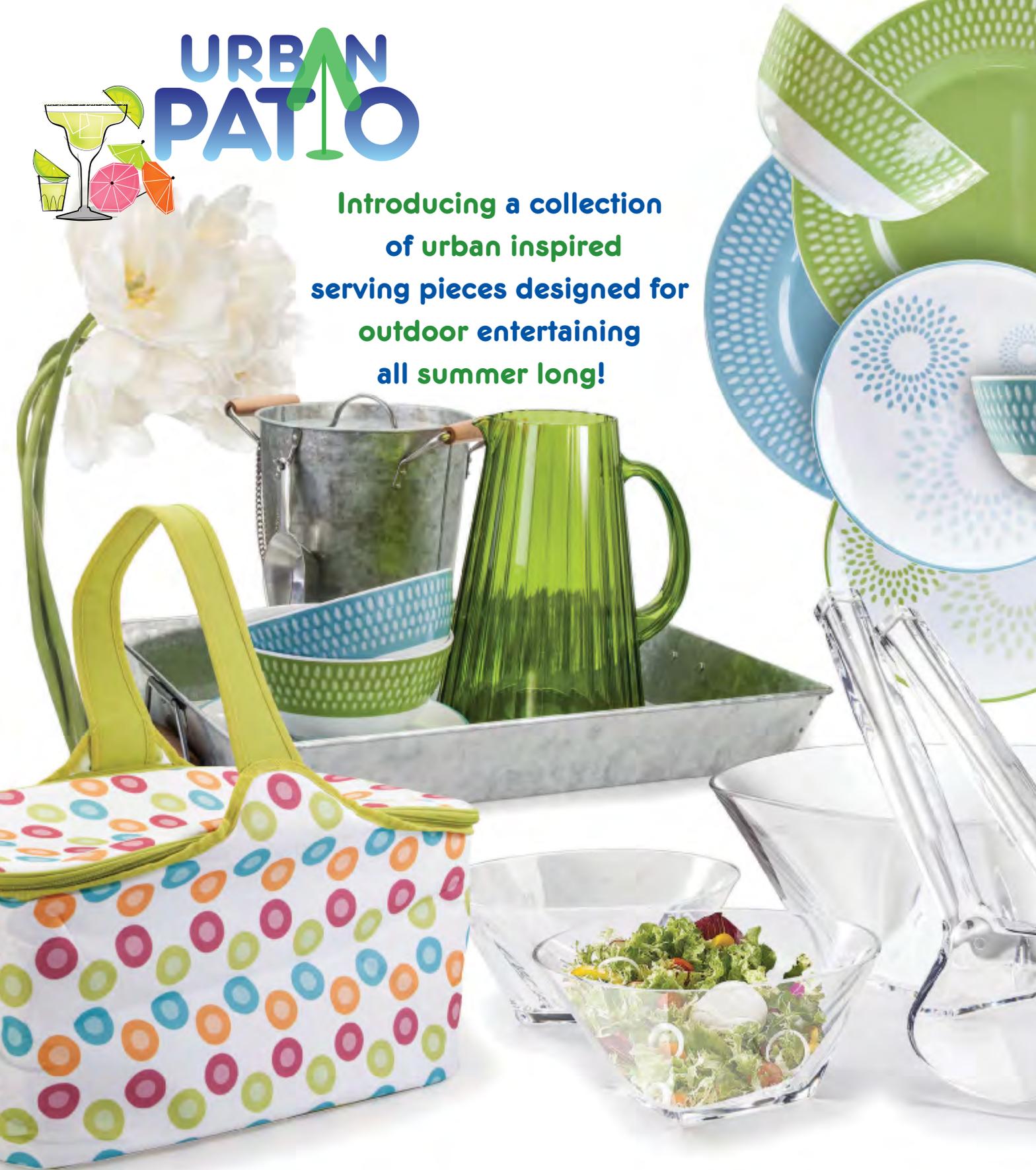
The new **Ricardo** knife block set offers a knife suited for every kitchen chore. Made of German MoV stainless steel, the blades are laser-tested, hardened and tempered. A honing device is integrated into the block and can be used to hone plain or rounded serrated knives. Ricardo's new space-saving bamboo knife block, below, features six slots to accommodate three larger knives and three smaller ones.



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# NY NOW

January 31 to February 4, 2015 • Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York

A comprehensive roster of educational sessions and special after-hours events will complement exciting product finds during the winter edition of NY NOW, the Market for Home + Lifestyle, to be held January 31st to February 4th at New York City's Jacob K. Javits Convention Center. In addition, awards for product excellence and special feature displays will celebrate the industry's best product designs in several categories.

Industry experts will share design and color trends, social media and related marketing strategies, the basics of importing and other business-building advice. NY NOW-hosted after-hour events include the popular "Night on Broadway" featuring specially-priced tickets to *THE LAST SHIP*. (A full seminar and event schedule is available online at [www.nynow.com/programs](http://www.nynow.com/programs).)

"From savvy business strategies to social media tips, NY NOW seminars cover practically every aspect of retailer education, and our after-hours entertainment showcases New York City's best offerings and our industry's highest achievers," says Scott Kramer, NY NOW co-director and vice president. "In addition, NY NOW's product excellence awards and special feature displays ensure that we spotlight the very best the industry has to offer."

Four seminar "tracks" – HANDMADE, HOME, LIFESTYLE and NEW! IDEAS – are designed specifically to complement NY NOW's comprehensive collections. Nearly 40 sessions presented during NY NOW also address issues and opportunities central to today's home and lifestyle industries.

Within the HOME track, ART (The Creative Network) will host "The Well-

Dressed Home: How Fashion Trends Influence Home Products." Jaye Anna Mize, *Home Interiors* editor of Fashion Snoops, will present an overview of fashion and color trends impacting the home, while Jenny Heinzen York, editor-in-chief of *Home Accents Today* will moderate and share findings from the magazine's "Fashion Forward" outlook report.

New York City's International Furnishings & Design Association also will host "Explore the Future with Color-Voyant 2015: Silence," in which Doty Horn, senior Vice President of Design at Congoleum, will focus on practical applications for four forecasted colour themes: Noise, Braille, Blur and Quiet.

As part of the LIFESTYLE track, the Day Spa Association will host "Spa-tacular Products to Boost Sales" showcasing "can't miss" products from the NY NOW exhibit floor. As an added bonus, seminar participants will receive coupons for show orders and a chance to win a swag bag containing free samples.

A fourth track, titled "NEW! IDEAS," recognizes the nation's growing "Maker Movement," and offers two seminars related to NY NOW's "Maker Project": Susan Szenasy of METROPOLIS will moderate "Modern-Day Matchmaking Redux: Tech Tools For 21st Century Makers," a look at how technology is fueling a growth in design and how ideas become products. Panelists include Matthew Burnett of Makers Row, Evan Cohen from IndieGoGo, Joanne Domeniconi of The Grommet and Abigail Keifer of Red Clay.

In a second "Maker Project" session, Erin Andrew of the Small Business Administration will present "Fostering

Small Business Entrepreneurship in Today's DIY Economy," focusing on tools and programs available to small businesses creating and selling self-made products.

Also, as part of the NEW! IDEAS track, Linda Cahan, visual merchandising and store design expert, and columnist for *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, will present "Store Design On a Shoestring: Design Or Renovate?" addressing trends in store design, and ideas for budgeting and creating a floor plan that works.

The NEW! IDEAS track will include a series of 15-minute seminars presented by SnapRetail, focusing on a variety of e-commerce, social media and e-marketing strategies – from how to get the most out of a store's website, to effective strategies for Pinterest and Instagram.

Two highly anticipated after-hours events are scheduled for Market Week. NY NOW's popular "A Night on Broadway" features specially-priced tickets to the Tuesday, February 3, performance of *THE LAST SHIP*, a new musical written by Sting. Tickets, normally priced at \$132, are \$99 before January 27 and \$109 after, for market participants.

Gift For Life hosts the 23rd anniversary "Party For Life" gala fundraiser on Monday, February 2. Proceeds from the tickets, priced at \$125, benefit DIFFA: Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS, one of the largest funders of HIV/AIDS service and education programs in the U.S.

NY NOW will encompass 100,000 products in 400+ product categories. Attendees from all 50 U.S. states and more than 80 countries worldwide are expected. Information and registration are available online at [www.nynow.com](http://www.nynow.com).

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## NY NOW New Product Preview



Island Stoneware is a manufacturer of handmade stoneware in Prince Edward Island, Canada. From a 7,500-square-foot manufacturing facility on a small island in the North Atlantic Ocean, the company creates a full line of handmade casual tableware. Collections such as Island Tide, Beach House and Island Stone blend rich glazes with the red clay of P.E.I.

**Visit Island Stoneware at booth 3152**



Thermosiv will be exhibiting a wide range of heating and therapeutic pet beds. The beds operate on low voltage and are energy-efficient, sending therapeutic infrared rays to help pets' joints and muscles. The beds also help keep them warm. Ideal for older pets, they come in small, medium and large sizes. The heating element inserts are laminated in dark grey.

**Visit Thermosiv at booth 10029**

Constructed in a sturdy plain-weave from 100% Belgian linen, the Sag Harbor collection features a dove grey stripe on a soft oyster ground, a palate reminiscent of afternoons spent in the cool shade of a coveted shoreline picnic spot. Available in napkins, placemats, table runners, and kitchen towels, the Sag Harbor is the perfect departure from the customary Spring selection of saturated jewel tones.

**Visit Libeco at booth 2448**



Linlenme will unveil stonewashed table linens in six colours: white, oatmeal, blue, rosa, aloe green, silver and taupe. Tablecloths, runners and napkins are made of 100% European linen, with mitered corner sewing. All items are pre washed twice during the production process for added softness. Easy to take care of, they can be machine washed and dried.

**Visit Linlenme at booth 2710**



The futa is the ultimate multi tasking textile. Traditionally used in bathhouses called hammams, futas have long been a staple in North Africa. Made from high quality Egyptian cotton, they are as absorbent as terry cloth, but are lighter, dry faster, and are far more versatile: as a beach towel, a sarong, a table runner, even a throw to brighten up the home. Futas come in a myriad of colours and textures and are hand fringed.

**Visit Jane Tryon at booth 532**





# EXQUISITELY DIVERSE

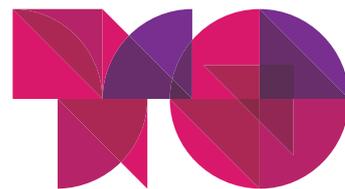
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## NY NOW New Product Preview



These handcrafted rugs are made from recycled cotton and are designed to withstand everyday use with minimal care. They are made using sustainable practices and dyes which are good-weave certified.  
**Visit Fab Habitat at booth 1457**



Following on the heels of the mini greenhouse, Sagaform has added single planters to their assortment. The glass dome will intensify the sun and create a greenhouse effect that allows for faster growth of herbs, flowers or vegetables. The planters can also be used outdoors.  
**Visit Sagaform at booth**

Finum is introducing a classic porcelain tea pot made in Germany. The Tea Pot System is similar to that used in restaurants with an interlocking brewing basket. It's perfectly adjusted so that it does not fall while serving and is not visible. The set is completed with a porcelain drip-off tray for the filter. It can safely go in the dishwasher.

**Visit Finum at booth 3534**

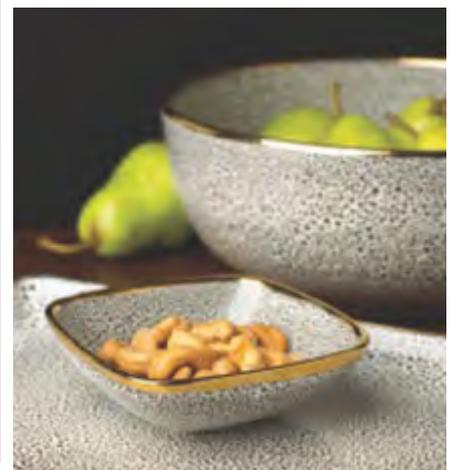


The French Farm will be showing this charming Torchons & Bouchons Camembert tea towel. Measuring 19 inches by 28.5 inches, it's made of durable 100% cotton printed with eco-friendly water-based ink. The style features the popular cheese from Normandy. Based in France, Torchons & Bouchons have been designing high quality kitchenware inspired by the French heritage for 12 years.

**Visit The French Farm at booth 3553**

The Poppy set of dishtowels from Mia + Finn represents a new category for the company. Shown below, the towels are block printed in three of the most popular patterns: Azeline, Andrew and Ayla. Each dish towel is made of soft and absorbent cotton and is machine washable.

**Visit Mia + Finn at booth 2671**



The Panthera tableware collection from Lenox is available as open stock pieces. The collection comes with either a gold edge or a platinum edge, above. Each piece is food and dishwasher-safe but cannot be used in the microwave. Pieces available include a nut dish, rectangular serving tray, medium-sized bowl and larger basket/bowl.

**Visit Lenox at booth 3324**

# NY NOW New Product Preview



Balance knives from Pfeilring are made with German steel in Asia. These unique knives are a combination of clever ergonomic design, excellent materials, quality workmanship and good value. A counter weight, embedded in the handle provides just the right "balance" during use. **Visit Pfeilring at booth 3745**

J. Fleet Designs is unique amongst lacquerware producers. They create luxurious colors and beautiful designs through painstaking attention to detail. Nothing is machine-made. Each tray has 15-20 coats of lacquer and takes 100 days to produce by dedicated artists. Shown right, the Fleur de lis pattern is heat-resistant and water-proof. **Visit J. Fleet Designs at booth 3767**



The stainless steel Eparé egg topper set includes a topper, two egg cups and two spoons. Simply pull up the handle and release. The spring mechanism will cause a vibration to the sharp edge in the dome and score the shell. The egg shell top will easily come away with the topper for a perfectly-served soft boiled egg. **Visit Eparé at booth 3573**



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## NY NOW New Product Preview



The Round Ruffle dinner plate from Q Squared is made of 100% BPA-free melamine. It's also available as a 12-inch serving bowl and both are dishwasher-safe. Though it has a delicate look, Luxe tableware is scratch and chip-resistant.  
**Visit Q Squared NYC at booth 3140**



This serving bowl is made of the finest, eco-friendly mango wood in Northern Thailand. It's food safe and ideal for fruits, salads or chips. It cleans up easily with warm soapy water.  
**Visit Circasia at booth 3353**

The Bakery Stripe Bistro apron has been hand woven by a women's weaving cooperative in Guatemala. They have hand embroidered a "cuenco" or bowl, a Maya symbol for hospitality, just above the pocket. The ample apron has generous ties that make it adjustable by rolling over the waistband. There are also coordinating dish towels and all are machine washable.  
**Visit Mayamam Weavers at booth 439**



Lunares brings new life to a casual table with sculptural objects that add unexpected detail. The GEO Collection features sculptures and bookends that can blend seamlessly on a table with more traditional serving pieces. The primary range comes in a vibrant gold or silver finish over the company's signature metal alloy.  
**Visit Lunares at booth 3320**



This set of four coasters from Caroline Gardner, above, includes four different designs with a cork back and UV matte varnish cover. This collection also includes a recipe tin with coordinating insert cards.  
**Visit Caroline Gardner at booth 7565**



The Ishikawa Prefectural Government of Japan's New York Office will be participating in NY NOW to promote the traditional arts and crafts of the region. This wooden bowl from The Art of Japan, above, emphasizes the essence of both traditional and contemporary Japanese design. The smooth, sleek natural wood products are so well crafted they require very little lacquer.  
**Visit Ishikawa Prefectural Gov't in booth 3471**



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## NY NOW New Product Preview



Sobremesa by Greenheart will launch the Desert Stripe and the Neutral Stripe textile collection. The fair trade 100% cotton linens are hand woven on a treadle foot loom by four Guatemalan brothers. There are five colours offered.



Designed in Switzerland and produced in Italy, 'The Napkins' is the original, single use premium napkin that looks and feels like fabric. The napkins are made of a soft fibre blend that is absorbent and sturdy. Offered in 12 trendy colours, the entire disposable line includes dinner/cocktail napkins, tablecloths runners and coasters. **Visit The Napkins at booth 3750**



Handwoven by artisans in Ethiopia of a cotton which is uniquely soft, yet sturdy and resilient, these kitchen textiles are elegant, yet practical, with fresh colours that won't fade. They are also machine washable. The Roha table linen collection of placemats is shown right. The line includes napkins and table runners as well, in black and white for a classic look.

**Visit Woven Promises at booth 416**



Ocean Kitchen towels will debut a new set of four brightly coloured, ocean-themed kitchen towels. The towels are screenprinted in four different on-trend colours featuring original illustrations. They are made of absorbent 100% cotton flour sack. The cloth is finished and hand-screened.

**Visit Ocean Kitchen Towels (Booth TBA)**



The HOST Freeze cooling pint glass chills 16 ounces of anything quickly. Made from BPA-free reusable plastic, it is less fragile than a pub glass for carefree drinking. After just two hours in the freezer, the cup's built-in proprietary cooling gel keeps drinks chilled for hours. It has an insulated rubber grip and 16-oz capacity. **Visit True Fabrications at booth 3250**



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## NY NOW New Product Preview



This adorable 'cozy' is ideal for a cup of tea, a plant or a candle. It's hand-stitched from hand-dyed wool and the stoneware has a soft white glaze. It holds 12 ounces.  
**Visit Kata Golda at booth 9407**

The Silver Needle Tea Company collection includes the four major categories: White, Green, Oolong, and Black. Each differs in their production process, reflecting oxidation and caffeine levels, taste and health benefits. Packaged in fine cylinders color-coordinated with each type of tea.  
**Visit Silver Needle Tea Co., booth 3579**



The new Zoku iced coffee maker works in just five minutes. Just pour in hot coffee or tea and it will instantly start chilling, no ice needed. The design-driven travel mug is spill-resistant and comes with a coloured sipping straw. It's designed to store in the freezer. To use, remove the frozen stainless steel mug from the freezer, place it into the insulating sleeve and pour in the hot coffee. It comes in four colours.  
**Visit Zoku at booth 3508**

The Nonna spoon, below, is an adaptation of a classic design inspired by the designer's grandmother. It features a comfortable spindle handle that helps grip cookware. It's wobble-free thanks the flat back of the spoon head. It's made of quality beechwood.

**Visit BottleBrooklyn at booth 10351**



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# Octagon Mktg.

Oliver, Belena and Karel Janousek



**B**elena and Karel Janousek are very passionate, but very different, people. She is fanatical in her pursuit of physical fitness, a devotee of yoga and a true believer in the healthy body/healthy mind connection. He is a gregarious, talkative ‘people person’ and avid collector (he owns several native masks and over 4,000 antique corkscrews!). Yet, as partners in Octagon Marketing, the sales agency Karel founded over 30 years ago, they share a common devotion to an industry and a country that has provided their family with a wonderful life.

Though they were both born in Prague, the couple didn’t meet until they were in Canada, where they had each settled in 1969 after escaping the Russian occupation of Czechoslovakia. They both had university degrees and were eager to start a new life together in Toronto. Karel was working for Georg Jensen, a high-end retailer of Scandinavian home decor, giftware and jewelry. Belena had a job in a foreign exchange office, which allowed her the freedom to study physical fitness and eventually become a full-time instructor. After they married, Belena was working on fitness programs in a private school when Karel was offered a chance to open a new Georg Jensen store on Sherbrooke Street so in 1977, they moved to Montreal.

The Janouseks spent the next three years there and had two children, Sonja and Oliver. Although they enjoyed the city, Belena – with her distinctive Eastern European accent – says she never felt comfortable speaking French. So when Karel was offered an opportunity to work as a manufacturer’s rep for Royal Copenhagen and relocate to the west coast, they jumped at the chance. In 1980, the family of four moved to White Rock, B.C.

Shortly after arriving, Karel formed his own agency and called it Octagon Marketing (he liked the fact it represented a double square) and started to take on new lines. His friendly, chatty approach (he speaks a little bit of several languages!) easily won over customers and the company grew. He kept asking his wife to join him but Belena was busy with her own business as a freelance fitness instructor, traveling around the region. Finally, in 1985 she gave in and, even though she had no sales experience, her no-nonsense attitude and strong work ethic were a definite asset to the agency.

Through his work at Georg Jensen, Karel had developed a taste for, and understanding of, the finer things in life. From the start, the couple’s intention was to only carry upscale, premium-quality product or ‘best in class’ as they call it. At first it was mostly giftware and Scandinavian glassware. Gradually they moved into housewares exclusively, which Belena says was a natural evolution.

“We’ve always felt if something wasn’t working, we can change it,” she says. “We found that in the 1990s, the industry was moving into more functional products for the home, more culinary products. We were adaptable, and lucky enough to know when to make the change. If you move too soon it becomes difficult because you’ve become a pioneer.”

Today, Octagon has an office/showroom in Vancouver’s Gift Exchange building (the Janouseks live close by). The agency handles

independent retail accounts for Le Creuset, Wusthof, Swissmar and Microplane throughout B.C. and Alberta. And although they have very different personalities, they also compliment each other and have endeared themselves to their customers as well as the vendors they represent.

Fontaine Wong at Ming Wo in Vancouver, who has dealt with the Janouseks for 20 years says “Belena is a force to be reckoned with. Confident and decisive, she brings with her a state of elegance you rarely see in today’s retail environment. She effectively communicates new products and ideas and acts on issues immediately to resolve them. Yet under this reserved facade is a woman with a great sense of humour. She is driven to succeed and her energy is infectious.”

She adds with a laugh “together they make such an entertaining sales team! Karel always defers the ‘last word’ to Belena, but I think this is just a ploy to keep peace on the homefront. With these two reps, you know you have a company that’s always working for you, not against you.”

Karel and Belena have seen a lot of changes since starting their agency, and know too well the problems posed by the many American big box stores that have arrived. Retailers are more demanding than ever, they say, yet they are up to the challenge and willing to go to great lengths to keep their customers happy. One of *their* happiest days arrived about four years ago when their son Oliver, 35, decided to join the company.

“One of our proudest achievements was when our son joined Octagon,” says Belena. “He can now take our vision into the future. We are so proud of the products we sell. They are of the best quality, they work beautifully and they don’t harm the environment. We believe in what we do, and now we can pass that on to the next generation.”

Oliver, who has a liberal arts background, insists he wasn’t pressured into the family business, but realized his parents needed help so thought he’d give it a try. He now loves the industry and is very proud of what Belena and Karel have built. “This business has sustained our family well for many years and I value the relationships they’ve created with customers. My dad did most of the hard work. I get to reap the benefits.”

Just because their son is on board, it doesn’t mean the Janouseks have plans to slow down anytime soon. Belena, an engaging woman with a vibrant inner spirit, says she prefers to live in the moment. “I don’t ever dwell on the past or the future”, she insists. “I believe as long as you’re healthy, you can handle whatever tomorrow brings.” 🐾



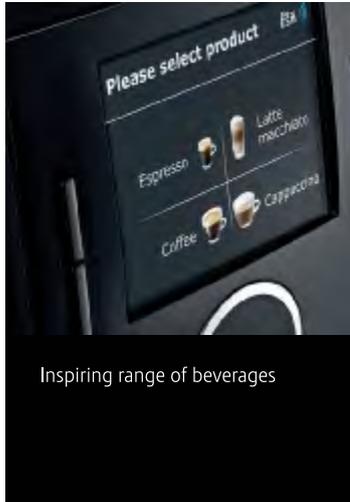
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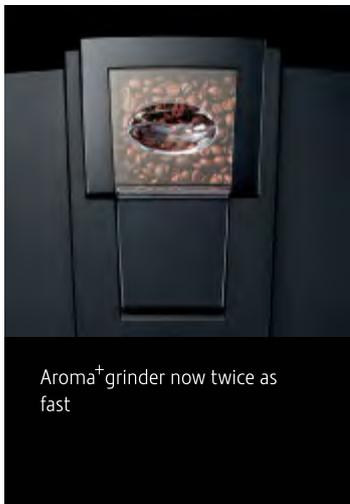
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