

HomeStyle

Canada's Housewares Magazine



July 2015

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On our cover



Portmeirion has partnered with Ted Baker to bring a colourful, whimsical new range of botanical tableware to the Canadian dining table.

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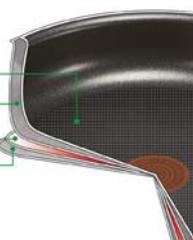
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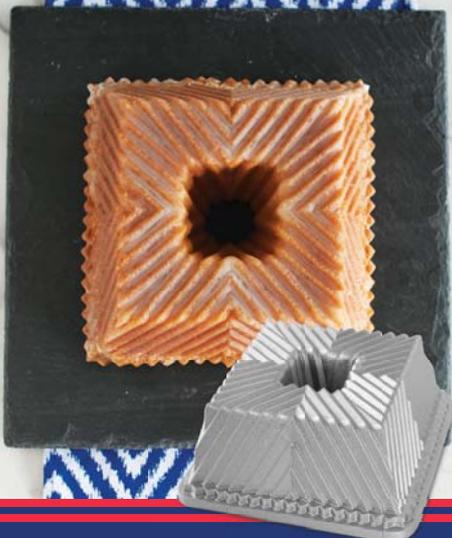
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Opening Lines

Housewares stories worth sharing

You would think that after 27 years in the housewares industry I would know pretty much everything there is to know about the companies involved. But I've just finished a big anniversary project that revealed just how much I *don't* know. Turns out, quite a lot.

The project I'm referring to is a special publication called *Profiles*, and it was mailed together with this issue so you've probably had a chance to go through it. *Profiles* features an overview of the key vendors in our industry, offering a glimpse at their past, present and future, and will hopefully serve as an ongoing resource for retailers for the next few years. In addition to telling their stories, each profile includes important contact information for sales agents and customer service reps as well as an overview of brands carried, satellite offices and trade show participation.

Though we did publish an annual directory of suppliers for two years when we first launched *Home Style* in 1990, this is the first time we have attempted anything this ambitious. It all started with a suggestion last summer from my friend Traudie Kauntz, the owner of Household China & Gifts. Her store had been featured in a local magazine profiling area retailers, and she thought it would be a great idea to produce a magazine offering a similar overview of housewares suppliers. I wasn't interested in producing another boring 'directory of vendors', but was intrigued by the thought of profiling some of the companies that have helped shape our industry over the past decades. I've always loved interviewing the super sales reps featured on our back page, and retailer profiles have been the backbone of this magazine, but I have never profiled vendors out of fear of showing favouritism to one over the other. A special edition with nothing but vendor profiles, however, would be a perfect way to celebrate our silver anniversary and pay tribute to the many companies that have contributed to our success.

Though we offered a special advertising rate for each two-page profile, the industry's response was greater than I ever expected. Thirty companies had signed up by year's end, and though three had to pull out at the last minute, I am very proud to say 27 leading companies are featured in *Profiles* and together they provide a balanced overview of what makes our industry so innovative.

A rich and fascinating compilation, these stories reflect the incredibly diverse nature of our business. Much like our country, the housewares industry is a true melting pot. As *Profiles* demonstrates, our industry is a perfect blend of huge global conglomerates and small Canadian entrepreneurs. There is the mother/daughter team of Jogi and Jolanta Sudnik, retailers who became wholesalers after discovering an amazing cleaning product called Universal Stone and setting up their own distribution network. At the opposite end of the spectrum, we look at some of the giants in the industry, like Philips Electronics and Groupe SEB. Though each have global roots in Europe, like many of the vendors profiled, they have made a unique contribution to the Canadian housewares landscape and deserve to be celebrated.

One aspect of *Profiles* that is particularly fascinating is how much of an impact our own home-grown distributors have made on the world stage. Companies like Atlantic Promotions, Trudeau, Browne, Swissmar, Danica and Danesco have helped propel Canada to the housewares forefront with exceptional proprietary product designs and brands now sold around the globe. Family-owned businesses are also a big part of our fabric, with second and third generation owners like Robert Burke of Royal Selangor building on their rich history and taking the company to new heights with game-changing brands like Sophie Conran.

All in all, producing *Profiles* was the biggest challenge I've ever taken on as a writer but it was also a privilege to tell these stories. I hope you enjoy reading this special anniversary publication and are able to use it in your business. More importantly, I hope you learn something. I know I did.

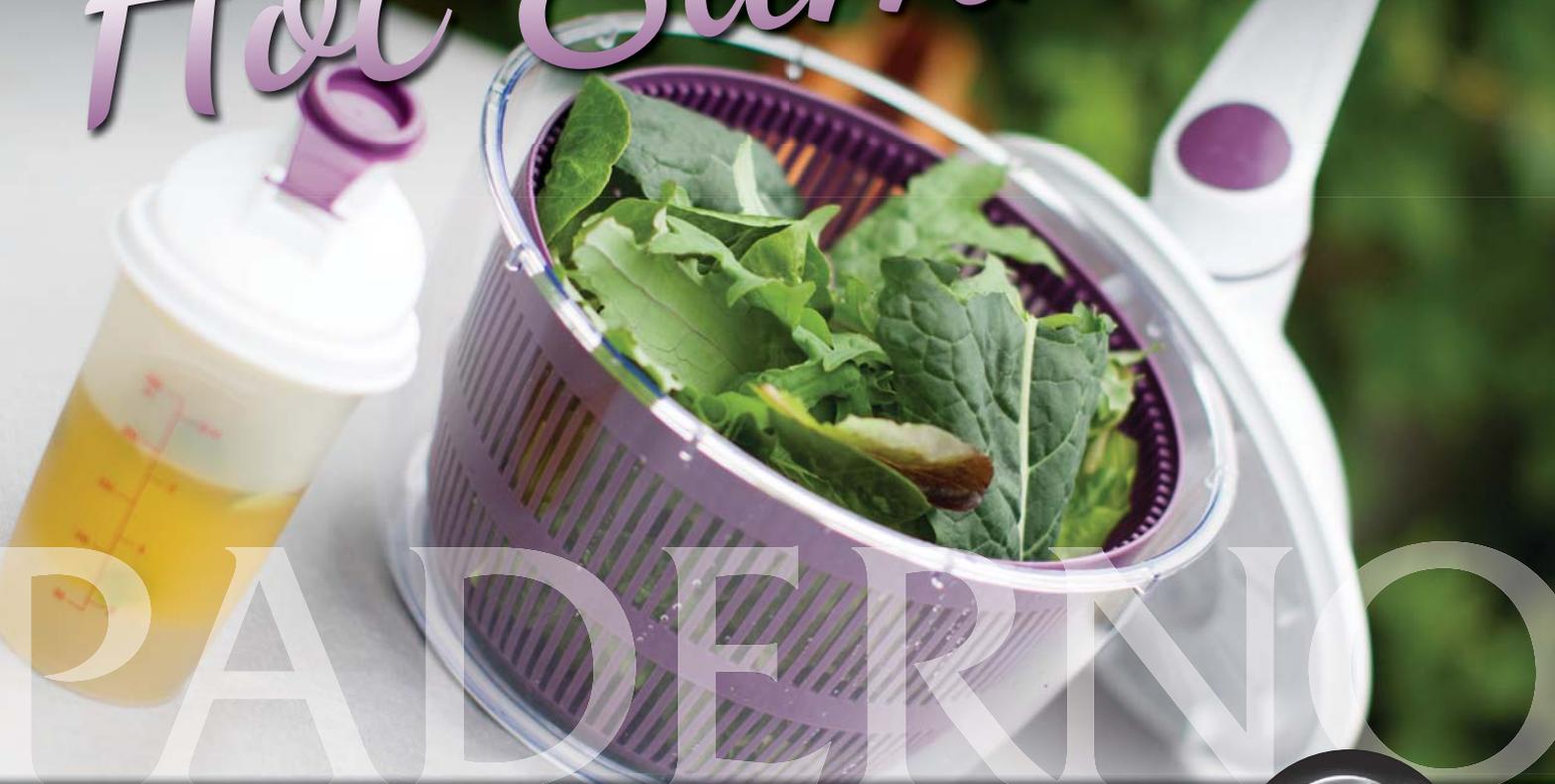


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- Denby has finalized the restructuring of its North American operations following the appointment of Global CEO, Sebastian Lazell, who joined the company earlier this year. **Dana Kelhart** is now marketing director and general manager for Denby North America, leading the North American business overall. Dana was formerly Marketing Manager. **Todd Jarvis** has been promoted to sales director for Denby North America, leading all national accounts across his native Canada and now the U.S. as well. Todd had several years' experience in the housewares industry prior to joining Denby in 2012 and has partnered successfully with a variety of different customers in his career. **Nicole Ramos** is now sales manager.

- After many years of working as an independent sales representative, **Harvey Geiger** is now working exclusively for WÜSTHOF Canada. On June 1st, Harvey joined WÜSTHOF as sales represen-

tative for Ontario, covering Windsor, to Oshawa and as far north as is inhabited. He is also responsible for Manitoba and growing the Culinary School program across Canada.

- Peter and Michael Browne have announced a new partnership at **Browne & Company**. An agreement has been signed with **Dennis Poon** and **Maggie Yau** as shareholders. The new association is expected to enhance Browne's global strategic vision with improved capabilities in all corporate activities: product design, manufacturing, sourcing, logistics, sales and marketing.

"Dennis and Maggie bring not only new young management but also extensive international experience in manufacturing, product and market development," explains Peter Browne, CEO.

As a result of the restructuring, **Peter Braley**, who handled the U.S. market for Browne, has opted to leave the company to pursue other opportunities.

- Home Hardware has created two new senior positions within the company. A single merchandise organization responsible for all product sourcing, led by one vice-president, has been announced, along with an integrated marketing and sales organization led by a vice-president, marketing and sales. **Joel Marks**, director of merchandise, hardlines, has accepted the first position, and at press time Home Hardware was still recruiting for the second position.

Under the newly integrated merchandise department, **Bruce White**, V.P., merchandise and marketing, will report to Marks. In addition, **Ray Gabel**, currently V.P. merchandise and marketing for hardlines, will transition to a new role as senior merchandise advisor, also reporting to Marks.

- The Retail Council of Canada has announced that the **Billes Family**, founders of Canadian Tire, are the 2015 recipient of the council's Lifetime Achievement Award. The accolade is awarded for outstanding business success and community service.

- HTI Buying Group has announced an overhaul of the brand's identity as well as an expansion of the group's corporate team. The new brand identity includes a redesigned company logo and an updated company website.

The group has also welcomed **Angela Warren** and **Robert McGinnis** to the corporate team. Warren will manage HTI's operations and member sales. She has 17 years of retail and sales experience. McGinnis will manage the group's customer service and member sales. He holds a degree in business administration/marketing and also comes with 10 years of experience in retail and customer service positions.

- **Hudson's Bay Co.** has entered into a definitive agreement with Metro AG to acquire Galeria Holding, the parent company of Germany's top department store chain Kaufhof, for about \$3.3 billion (U.S.). The deal will give HBC a gateway to opening its Saks Fifth Avenue chain in Europe.

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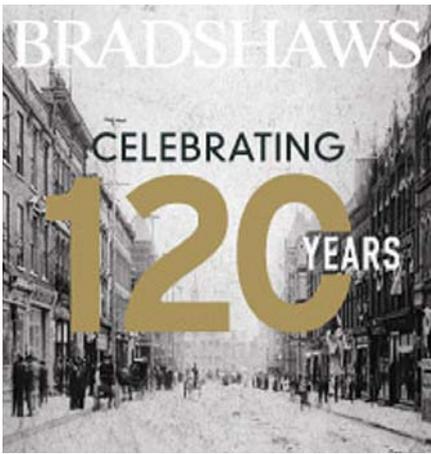


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Retailer marks a major milestone

At Bradshaws in Stratford, Ontario, proud owners Carrie and Jeremy Wreford celebrate more than a century of success

The oldest retail store in the city of Stratford, Ontario, Bradshaws will mark 120 years in business in 2015. The store has been run by six generations of Stratford families including three members of the Bradshaw family, and three of the Wreford family. The store is located on Stratford's historic downtown main street, where it's currently owned and operated by Jeremy and Carrie Wreford, right.

Established in 1895 by J.L. Bradshaw, the business was originally called J.L. Bradshaw China Hall. It began as a china retailer with the majority of the products imported directly from Britain. Since then, it has evolved into a multi-brand store carrying tableware, kitchenware, bath and body products, gifts and jewelry. Although the product assortment has changed over the years, relationships with many suppliers remain in place today, some existing for over a century.

The retail side of the business was purchased from the Bradshaw family by Bill Wreford, who had been working for the wholesale side of J.L. Bradshaw Ltd. as a sales representative, and his father, Gordon, in 1975. Gordon retired five years later so Bill and his wife Sharon ran the business for the next 32 years.

In 2006, when they were looking to sell the business and retire, their son Jeremy and his wife Carrie had just relocated from Toronto and they decided to take over and keep the store in the family. The wholesale importing company J.L. Bradshaw Ltd. is still operated by the



Bradshaw/Rowe family and is a completely separate business, however.

Originally located at 84 Ontario Street, Bradshaws moved to its present location at 129 Ontario Street in 1983. With the help of local designers and tradespeople, they created a space tailored to its product selection at the time.

In the mid-80's, Bill opened a stand-alone kitchen store, Kitchen Detail, and a Crabtree & Evelyn store down the street from Bradshaws. All stores were combined under one roof 10 years later. The current business covers about 4,500 square feet of retail space and is comprised of many small departments and shop-in-shops.

Carrie and Jeremy attribute the store's longevity to its ability to change with the times, while staying true to its reputation for quality.

"The store ran as a china shop for the

first 80 years but as people's values began to change, the store adapted to address their new interests. There was less formal dinnerware and collectibles and more of a focus on lifestyle, home entertaining and products that address the growing food culture" explains Carrie Wreford.

An online shop was established in 2013, and marketing has changed with the times to include a greater emphasis on their website, a blog, social media and various online advertising initiatives.

"It is our goal to remain relevant in a constantly changing retail landscape, with the hope that we'll be around for another 120 years" says Jeremy.

Bradshaws is located in the city that's renowned for its vibrant theatre and culinary scene, which Carrie says has been another key factor in the store's success. "Stratford is a special place, and we're happy to be a part of the community" she says.

Bradshaws held a special Birthday Bash on Sunday May 3 and will continue to celebrate throughout the year.

For a virtual tour of this beautiful store, visit www.bradshawscanada.com

For more historical info, please visit www.bradshawscanada.com/history.htm

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Retailers In The News

Gifts and Gadgets celebrates 20 years

The first week of June was filled with discount sales and celebrations at Gifts and Gadgets in Spruce Grove, Alberta. The store's owner, Sharon Yeast, marked the occasion with a catered luncheon for 175 friends and customers on June 1st. There was a cake-cutting with Stuart Houston, the Mayor of Spruce Grove, gadget draws and Spin the Wheel prizes (donated by industry suppliers) as well as special presentation for Sharon and her husband Ron Stropel by the Chamber of Commerce.

At the end of the week, Sharon and Ron proudly drove their 1929 Model A (shown below) in the Stony Plain Farmers Day Parade - with the store's name engraved on the window of course!



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 - Danesco - Lexa Shropshire
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 - Edenborough - Linda Zanier
 - Epicurian Cutting Boards - Jerry Polsky
 - Fox Run Craftsman - Jerry Polsky
 - Gourmet Village - Barry and Tessa Larivierre
 - Jean Kirkwood
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 - Kitchen Innovation
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 - Swiss Army - Chris Clement
 - Swissmar - Ford Nixon
 - The Tate Group
 - Trudeau Corp - Chris Clement
 - Wilton - Suzanne Scanlan
 - Zwilling JA Henckel - Bill Marshall



It seemed as though the entire town of Spruce Grove came out for the Gifts and Gadgets anniversary luncheon on June 1st. Employees baked cakes and cupcakes while suppliers donated prizes for a Spin the Wheel game. There were daily draws for gadgets and discounts as well as 20% off everything on June 1st. A local business, the Mad Platter Bistro, catered the luncheon, which was attended by the Mayor, the CEO of the Chamber of Commerce and several industry sales reps.

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Lodge honoured with President's award

Lodge Manufacturing Company was recently honored recently with a 2015 President's "E" Award for Export Excellence at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. Hosted by U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker, Lodge was one of 45 American exporters recognized.

Lodge currently sells more than 130 cast iron products worldwide (represented by Counseltron in Canada). CEO Bob Kellermann and his wife Cheryl were on hand to accept the award.

The E-Awards began in 1961 when President Kennedy signed an executive order to honor America's exporters.



From left: U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker, Bob Kellermann of Lodge, Cheryl Kellermann of Lodge and Arun Kumar, Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

A new grill gift guide for gadget lovers

Cook's Illustrated has created a gift guide of gadgets designed for grilling meats. The list includes six gadgets less than \$150. A 6-inch meat cleaver from Global was included for its sharp blade and balanced design. Bear Paws meat handlers were added for their ability to shred barbecued meat. Norpro's Vertical Roaster with infuser was also on the list for its ability to cook poultry evenly and crisp the skin all over, said the company.

Wüsthof launches updated web site

Wüsthof has launched its newly renovated website, www.wusthof.com. The new site includes a knife skills academy with a dozen new video tutorials for consumers, such as "honing vs. sharpening" and "how to dice an onion." A knife-finder feature offers tutorials and

explanations of the range of knives offered by the company.

Simultaneously, the company has launched a promotional video that goes behind the scenes of the company's factory in Solingen, Germany.

The website also has an updated 'where to buy' feature with search capabilities promoting both brick-and-mortar locations as well as online retailers.

EveryWare emerges from Chapter 11

EveryWare Global has successfully completed its financial restructuring and emerged from Chapter 11. The company exits the restructuring process with a significantly reduced debt load and strengthened balance sheet. The exit financing includes a \$70 million asset-based revolving credit facility and a \$40 million term loan provided by a group of EveryWare's post-petition lenders.

Canadian sales director Matt Carter left the company May 8th.

Jarden releases Ball Blue Book

Jarden has released its latest edition of *The Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving*, which includes 75 new recipes for preserving and canning. Jarden, the manufacturer of Ball brand home products, states that the 2015 edition is the largest update of the book since the first one in 1909.

In addition to the new recipes, the book also contains pictorial step-by-step guides for beginners, a special section for meal creations, as well as "You Choose" and "Our Tip" recommendations, where consumers will find creative variations and helpful techniques to create their own signature foods.

The 37th edition of the *Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving* is available now at select grocery, hardware, mass retailers and e-tailers nationwide.



Lenox buys Reed & Barton

Reed & Barton has been acquired by Lenox Corporation, which reportedly outbid Lifetime Brands.

According to the *Newsday* report, Lenox submitted a cash bid of \$22.2 million to acquire the operating assets and some of the company's liabilities, mostly trade debt. Lifetime Brands had made a \$15 million offer. The offer will still need approval from the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Boston.

In February 2015, Lifetime Brands announced that it had agreed to purchase the operating assets and to assume certain liabilities of Reed & Barton, which had filed for bankruptcy protection.

Smartphone a key part of purchasing

While most consumers still prefer to shop in physical stores, the smartphone has increasingly become an integral part of in-store behavior. While the phone isn't used primarily for payments, it is having a significant impact on the shopping trip, based on a new global study.

Most consumers (85%) globally say that they have used their smartphone in-store. This is an increase from 72% just a year ago. And it's not only using a smartphone in a store but rather the impact it's having. The majority (55%) of smartphone users say the Internet and smartphones have changed the way they shop in a store. Perhaps more significantly, 77% of Internet users have been influenced by mobile during the purchase process.

In terms of online shopping behavior by device, laptop purchasing leads the way, but for only half of buying activity. The purchasing device least used is the tablet.

An interesting insight is that the main source of information for shoppers is a retailer website or app in terms of resources they use when looking for information on a product or service. The store itself is the second choice, followed by friends and family and then price comparison sites.



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KitchenAid unveils innovative new appliances

KitchenAid Canada hosted a special luncheon for customers and media on June 17th in Toronto to showcase the company's latest countertop appliances. The event also celebrated 95 years of culinary innovations.

In addition to an exciting range of craft coffee brewers (featured in our last issue) a highlight of the event was the launch of the new Precise Heat Mixing Bowl now available on the iconic KitchenAid stand mixer. Shown right, this unique appliance uses precise temperature technology for heating delicate ingredients, including melting cheese, tempering chocolate and even kneading bread dough.

Also on display was the new KitchenAid Torrent blender featuring a unique magnetic drive.



Amy Kazlovskis and Jacqueline Probert show off the company's new bakeware line-up.



Andrea Suarez demonstrates the features of the Precise Heat Mixing Bowl, shown above.



Home Hardware moves first store

Home Hardware's very first store has a new home. St. Jacobs Home Hardware celebrated its new location on the other side of the main street of the small Ontario town that is also home to the company's head office/distribution centre.

Seventy years ago, the store was managed by Henry Sittler, who hired Walter Hachborn to handle sales. When owner Gordon Hollinger passed away, Sittler and Hachborn purchased the store.

The original location will be renovated to accommodate an expanded Home Furniture store and a museum of Home Hardware history.

Hudson's Bay sees big jump in sales

Company-wide first quarter sales at Hudson's Bay Company were up more than 10% as the company's continued focus on driving e-commerce sales led to a sales jump of more than 37%.

Retail sales for the period ending May 2nd were \$2.1 billion, an increase of \$217 million or 11.7% from sales of \$1.85 billion in the prior year. Consolidated same store sales increased by 2.7% while same store sales increased by 4.9%. Digital commerce sales increased by 37.2% when compared to the prior year, reflecting the company's continued strategic focus on growing this channel.

Martha Stewart to work with Staples

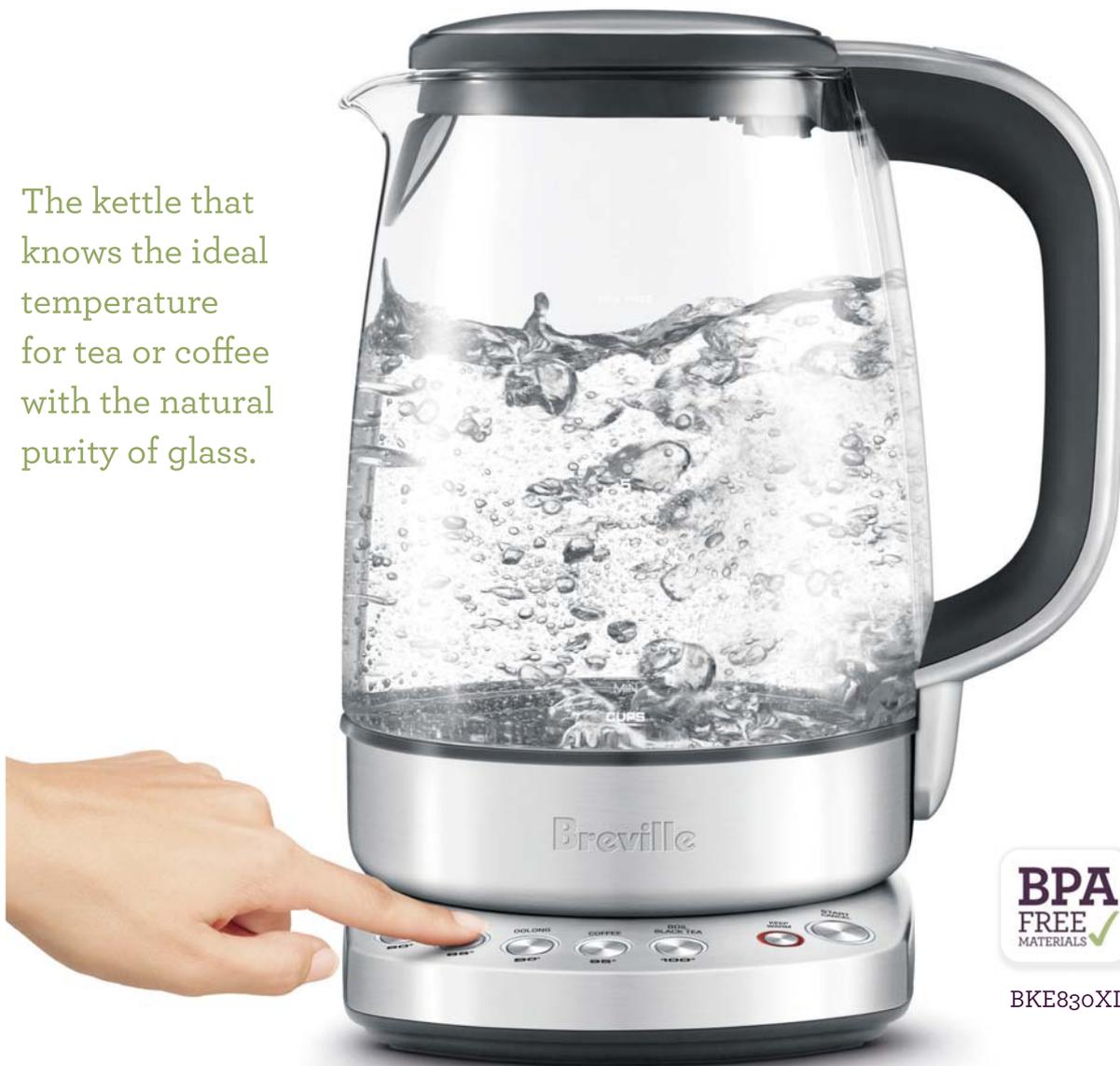
Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia and Staples are collaborating on the production and distribution of home office products. The multi-year deal will involve new Martha Stewart Home Office products exclusively at Staples stores, Staples.com and Quill.com beginning in November. The two companies previously collaborated in 2012 on a line of products currently available at Staples.

The products will include stationery and paper products, office essentials and tools, personal technology accessories, and storage

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Trudeau Maison makes its debut



This year marks the beginning of a new era for Trudeau, one of Canada's oldest and most respected housewares firms. This spring, the company unveiled a brand new division, called Trudeau Maison, that will take the place of Home Presence.

Trudeau Maison products will be targeted to volume retailers and features coordinated packaging and eye-catching merchandise displays. The range includes affordably-priced gadgets, cookware, kitchen tools and food prep accessories.

To officially unveil the distinctive new collection, Trudeau Maison president Jacques Dubuc hosted an open house at the Boucherville, Quebec, head office on May 12th. The event showcased all the new products and was held to thank the employees, friends and family members for their hard work and contribution to the success of Maison Trudeau.

Above, kitchen tools and gadgets are merchandised in wooden boxes with a vintage grocery store feel. Top right, Jacques Dubuc and Philippe Trudeau cut the ribbon on a new chapter in the company's history with the launch of the new Trudeau Maison collection. Right, visitors browse the assortment at an open house in Boucherville in May.



The *Canadian Lifestyles 2015* report predicts consumer spending will continue to rise, reaching \$1.084 trillion this year, and increasing by 4.7% over the next five years. The category making the biggest gains is grocery.

In a survey of 2,000 Canadians, 31% said they've spent more on in-home food in the past year, 56% said they've spent the same, and only 12% said they've spent less. By comparison, 17% said they've spent more on dining out, 48% said they've spent the same, and 33% spent less.

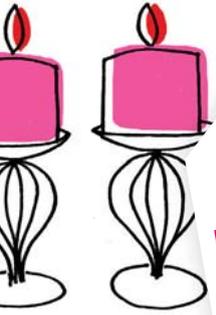
The grocery gains "tie into a focus on family, as well as health and eating better. Consumers don't necessarily want to be eating out all the time," says Carol Wong-Li, senior lifestyle analyst at Mintel in Toronto.

Where Canadians are cutting back is on leisure, entertainment and recreation. "When families with bigger households participate in leisure activities, it's expensive," says Wong-Li. "So that's the category that is going to be hit the hardest."

In the survey, 32% of respondents said they've spent less on leisure/entertainment and 52% said they've spent the same; and 27% said they've spent less on vacations and 44% said they've spent the same.

Consumers are also cutting back on booze: 35% spent less on drinks outside the home, 37% spent the same, and just 7% spent more. In the home, 25% spent less on alcoholic drinks, 49% spent the same and 10% spent more.

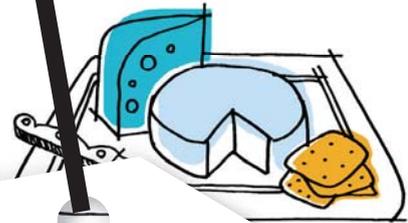
Though consumers are a bit more conservative in their spending, Mintel says they're still looking to treat themselves and are making "sensible splurges" a priority. When asked where they spend their "extra money" (once the bills are paid and the essentials have been purchased), 34% said they pay off debt, 31% said a long vacation (three or more days), 31% said dining out, 24% said small "extras" for family members, and 23% said a short vacation.



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Toronto attracts top international brands

A recent CBRE report names Toronto as the 'hottest' market for international retail expansion in the Americas, attracting 25 new international brands in 2014. Toronto beat out cities such as Los Angeles, New York City, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, and others.

The CBRE report, called *How Global is the Business of Retail*, tracked new brands entering 164 cities in 50 countries. The report found that U.S. retailers are the most active when expanding into global markets. In 2014, American retailers accounted for 26% of all cross-border expansion. Italian retailers were second at 14%, following by U.K.-based retailers at 11% and French retailers with 10% of all cross-border expansion.

The study determined that 26% of retailers expanding into the Americas were 'Luxury & Business' retailers, followed by 20% for 'mid-range' retailers, followed by 'Specialist Clothing' at 14%.

Toronto attracted 25 new international brands. With a diverse population with a good level of disposable income, it's unsurprising that interest in Toronto is high. Many of the foreign brands that have come to Canada over the past few years have been very profitable. Other brands are seeing and recognizing this positive reception of their competitors as an opportunity for their own success in the Canadian marketplace.

Tourists are increasingly seeing Toronto as a popular shopping destination, which should increase even further with the opening of stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue and Nordstrom next year.

Best Buy opens web site to other retailers

After closing its Future Shop chain in late March, Best Buy Canada is betting on an unlikely source to help shore up its business: rival retailers. The country's largest electronics retailer is preparing to invite other merchants to sell products on its e-commerce site.

Future Shop stores across Canada were closed this spring by Best Buy

Canada, leaving its 1500 employees jobless. Best Buy is also shrinking its store network, closing 66 of its 258 stores.

This fall, Best Buy will launch an online "marketplace" in a move that can expand its product offerings into more categories and help it take on digital powerhouses eBay.ca and Amazon.ca.

"The market is underserved in Canada," says Thierry Hay-Sabourin, V.P. of e-commerce at Best Buy Canada "There is an opportunity for Canadian retailers to leap frog the development effort of total-retail by partnering with us. We're willing to extend this opportunity even to our competitors."

Under the new strategy, Best Buy will receive a commission on sales of other retailers' goods, while giving those merchants broader exposure than they can achieve on their own.

HBC chief believes in bricks & mortar

Jerry Storch, the new chief executive officer of Hudson's Bay Company, believes in bricks-and-mortar stores. The overwhelming majority of retail sales still take place in bricks-and-mortar stores and they continue to be profitable, even as companies strain to grow e-commerce.

"I'm a firm believer in the power of the Internet but I don't dismiss stores," says Storch, who founded and grew Target.com and who served as chairman and CEO of Toys R Us.

Storch joined HBC in December, putting him in charge of Hudson's Bay and Home Outfitters banners in Canada, as well as Saks Fifth Avenue and Lord & Taylor in the U.S.

In his keynote address at the Retail Council of Canada's annual conference in Toronto last June, Storch pointed out that all the effort around getting online is obscuring the fact that online sales often eat into profit margins. "When a customer makes a purchase in-store, they walk the product home. When a customer makes a purchase online, the retailer has to have a system for selecting the product, boxing it and mailing it,

adding significant costs to the transaction.

HBC is lucky, Storch says. Most of the retailer's online orders are high-value. Still, there are customers who have figured out that they can order five dresses when they want one, and just return the ones they don't want, again adding even more costs to transaction.

Storch believes creating exciting retail spaces is key, like the new Saks Fifth Avenue opening within the Hudson's Bay store on Queen Street next spring.

Canadian Tire opens digital innovation lab

Canadian Tire has opened Digital Garage, its second digital innovation lab, in Waterloo, Ontario. The lab will allow Canadian Tire to develop new in-store and online technologies, including software, products and apps.

Digital Garage is located just across the parking lot from Canadian Tire's 10-person lab at Communitech, a hub for startups and digital companies, which Canadian Tire joined in 2013.

"We've been on a mission to design new elements for the Canadian Tire system and the Digital Garage is our sandbox," says Eugene Roman, chief technology officer. "We needed extra space and some of it is a secret lab. We're going to do a lot of experimentation versus Communitech where people can see what you're working on."

Digital Garage can accommodate up to 40 employees and will staff several co-op students from local universities. The lab is part of Canadian Tire's ongoing digital transformation. Last year, the company launched a digital loyalty program and opened Cloud Nine Digital Innovation Centre in Winnipeg.

The company also launched its first "Showcase" store, a 140,000-square-foot space spread over two floors. Staffed by 240 associates, the store will use interactive technology to personalize the customer's experience. Store flyers will be viewable digitally, while the Seasonal department will feature a 3D backyard visioning app.



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Ikea explores the kitchen of the future

Ikea has predicted how the kitchen of the future will look, and its most revolutionary idea is a table that teaches the user how to cook. The retail giant's Concept Kitchen 2025, shown at this year's Milan Design Week, aims to show how people will be growing, storing and cooking food in a decade's time.

Futuristic features include cooling containers to keep food fresher for longer and a recycling system that automatically separates materials.

A highlight of the exhibit was *A Table For Living*. Using a projector suspended above a table, the technology can "draw" on the table's surface to show how to make a recipe or suggest meals to make based on ingredients on hand.

The table will also weigh ingredients and demonstrate how to cut them. It also features a built-in hob, so food could be cooked simply by placing a saucepan or pan directly onto the table.

Ikea sees it as a "preparation surface, hob, dining table, work bench and children's play area", with a view to "helping make us more confident cooks, while letting less food go to waste".

Here in Canada, Ikea is expanding on a different scale. The retailer will open its smallest retail location in Canada in London, Ontario, this fall, it was announced Wednesday morning.

The 20,000-square-foot pick-up centre will feature a limited number of items for purchase and immediate takeaway and 10 tablets on site for customers to browse and buy online. It will offer services including merchandise pick-up, home delivery, assembly, planning, returns and exchanges and online sales support.

A regular Ikea location is about 260,000 to 340,000 square feet. The new location will employ about 20 people.

Canada is one of the countries being used as a test market for the new retail concept. It has proven popular in Norway and in Spain, where 3,000 people lined up for opening day.

With the new London pick-up point, area customers will be able to pick it up

themselves or pay \$80 for delivery within London. The store will feature five bathroom displays; four kitchen displays; three bed displays; four PAX wardrobe displays; 75 home furnishings displays; eight planning desks, and material and finish samples.

Williams Sonoma targets American girls

American Girl has partnered with Williams-Sonoma on a new line of premium, American Girl-branded products including baking sets, utensils, food mixes and a cookbook. The line will be available this fall at Williams-Sonoma and American Girl stores, as well as online. The partnership will also create cooking classes for girls that will launch in June at retail locations.

The exclusive products will feature baking sets that allow girls and their parents to create a variety of baked goods at home together, like cookies, cupcakes and French Madeleines. The culinary classes will be priced at \$30 and include co-branded gift bags.

"We love the idea of supporting family time through baking and cooking and our brand will deliver high quality products that teach and inspire creativity in the kitchen," says Janet Hayes, president, Williams-Sonoma.

Williams-Sonoma has also created a limited edition American Girl spatula which will be carried at both companies' stores beginning in late June. The spatula is part of the No Kid Hungry fundraising campaign and has a suggested retail price of \$12.95 with 30% of the proceeds benefiting the charity.

Amazon intends to enlist everyday humans in its network of online shopping delivery. The e-commerce giant is working on an app that would allow the average consumer to make a little extra cash by picking up Amazon packages at various retail locations and dropping them off at their final destination.

Restoration Hardware adopts a new focus

When the recession dealt furniture retailers a beating, Restoration Hardware responded in a counterintuitive way: It went upscale and became a mecca for \$7,015 linen couches and \$9,195 crystal chandeliers. The strategy worked. By leaving middle-class consumers behind, Restoration Hardware found a lucrative niche among the elite, allowing its business to not only survive, but also grow.

The company is now trying to reach an even wider audience by launching a new "mirror image" brand that has the same price point but a different vibe. It aims to stick with a strategy that largely focuses on bricks-and-mortar stores, unusual in an era when many retailers are pushing to boost their digital presences.

Restoration Hardware's latest quarterly earnings show that revenue rose 15% and profit soared by 38%. Over the past five years, its annual comparable sales have averaged 25% growth.

Restoration Hardware typically has taken its design inspiration from the distant past. But the new concept is dubbed RH Modern. It includes contemporary items such as a shaggy chaise lounge, an eight-legged "spider table" and a coffee table that resembles a Tetris piece.

The company will roll out the new brand this fall, with a dedicated Web site, the first physical store openings, and a 300-page catalogue.

The addition of RH Modern isn't the only major change at Restoration Hardware. It's also in the process of re-vamping its fleet of stores, moving them out of regional shopping malls and building sprawling outposts in high-design, standalone buildings. With six to eight times the selling spaces of its existing stores, the company expects these bigger outposts to generate two to four times as much revenue.

At a time when many retailers are increasing their digital presence, this is an unusual strategy. But Restoration Hardware believes the customer wants to touch and feel the products before buying them, and bigger stores give it more chances to let shoppers do that.

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Men and women buy appliances differently

When men and women go shopping for appliances, they're both looking for the best price but they go about getting it in slightly different ways. Women are more likely to take advantage of e-mail notices of sales and discounts while men are more likely to negotiate. That's what *Consumer Reports* discovered in its annual Appliance Retailer Satisfaction survey of more than 21,000 subscribers who bought more than 32,000 appliances.

Male and female shoppers also differ in how they approach their purchases. Women are more interested in seeing and touching the products. By a margin of 6%, women preferred shopping for a major appliance in person. And although women paid, on average, almost \$40 more for major appliances than men, they were much more likely to get a price break by doing their homework and finding discounts.

Male shoppers were more likely to try to negotiate the price of a major appliance—though only 36% of all respondents made an effort. Yet when the women did haggle, they were just as effective at getting a deal. About 75% of men and women who tried to negotiate ended up saving money.

Neither males nor females dominated decisions over which appliance to buy with one exception – gas grills. When it came to grill purchases, men were 5% more likely to make the purchase.

Another recent survey by *Consumer Reports* in the U.S. revealed that Americans shop a variety of retailers for small kitchen electrics, but some of the locations may come as a surprise to some.

Amazon.com is a favorite for those looking for vacuum cleaners, coffee makers, grills and other small appliances. Consumers gave Amazon high marks for selection, product quality, ease of checkout and customer support. Warehouse club Costco topped Amazon in one area, pricing.

Williams-Sonoma got high marks for product quality and ease of checkout while also being lauded for customer support on its e-commerce outlets.

10 TOP EATING TRENDS DRIVING THE FOOD INDUSTRY

Fresh foods, reasonable snacking, exotic flavors and meal solutions that require less cooking are among the new macro trends driving the American food industry, according to research from the Institute of Food Technologies.

The company found that 5.1 evening meals per week are cooked at home and involve a diversity of product options. In a typical week, 3.1 dinners are prepared at home using fresh/raw ingredients; 1.4 dinners include prepackaged ingredients that require preparation; 0.9 involve heating/serving prepackaged foods; 0.6 feature takeout; and another 0.9 are eaten in a restaurant.

The survey also identified the top 10 foods trends for 2015:

- **Fresh Foods.** Nearly nine in 10 adults feel that fresh foods are healthier; 80% believe that they are tastier; and 78% of consumers are making a strong effort to eat more fresh versus processed foods. The report found that by 2018, fresh breakfast eatings are expected to jump 9%; lunch, 7%; and dinner, 5%. Fresh eatings by Millennials and Gen Z consumers will increase 11.1% and 7.5%, respectively.
- **Lifestyle Specific.** Dramatic changes in lifestyles, eating patterns, and demographics are motivating new food product purchases. Nearly half (47%) of all eating occasions are alone, even in multi-person households. In 2014, men were the primary food shopper in 43% of households; 46% of men helped with meal preparation in 2014 versus 38% in 2001.
- **Reasonable Snacking.** The average number of in-between-meal snacks grew from 1.9 per person per day in 2010 to 2.8 in 2014. Half (51%) of adults ate three or more snacks per day, up from 21% in 2010.
- **Discovering New Cuisines.** In 2013, 41% of all eating occasions, 33% of snacking occasions, and 29% of kids' eating occasions involved a sophisticated culinary experience characterized by unique flavors. Gourmet chocolate, oils, and cheese are purchased by more than half of specialty food shoppers; coffee, salty snacks, meat/poultry/fish, frozen desserts, bread/baked goods, and tea are purchased by more than 40%. Ethnic fusion tops the list of hot cuisines/flavors for 2015.
- **Exclusion Diets.** In 2014, one-third of adults tried a specialty regimen; 8% tried gluten-free; 7%, lactose-free, 6%, raw/living foods; 5%, dairy-free; and 5%, a juice cleanse. Also, 17% of adults are making some effort to follow a partially vegetarian diet, fueling the top appetizer for 2015: meatless/vegetarian dishes.
- **Breakfast.** Most households are eating breakfast five times per week, the report found, and half of breakfasts are eaten alone.
- **Rethinking Natural.** In 2014, the report found that 29% of consumers bought more local foods/beverages; 28% bought more organic products; 25%, more natural foods; and 23%, more non-GMO offerings while three in 10 made a strong effort to consume more minimally processed foods. Truly natural sweeteners (agave, honey, concentrated fruit juice, and maple syrup) are among the hot culinary ingredients for 2015 and nose-to-tail/root-to-stalk cooking enjoyed the largest jump in interest.
- **Whole Food Nutrition.** Fiber/whole grain were the most sought after food ingredients in 2014. Non-wheat noodles/pasta (quinoa, rice, or buckwheat) top the list of side dish culinary trends hot for 2015. Non-wheat flour ranks third among the hot culinary ingredient trends for 2015; ethnic flours are ranked seventh.
- **Cook-Less Meals.** More than a quarter (28%) of consumers say that they are preparing more meals in less than 20 minutes than they did five years ago. One-pot meals were up 29%, and meals using marinated meats and poultry were up 21%. Packaged meals and kits, oven baking, and take-and-bake products are all popular.
- **Diet Watching.** More than half (53%) of adults are watching their diet; 66% do so for general health reasons; 55%, to lose weight; 40%, to limit, fat, sugar, sodium, etc.

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Industry Update



Chicago show gets new look for 2016

New branding, graphics and several category changes are planned for the 2016 International Home + Housewares Show, the International Housewares Association has announced. The show will be held March 5 to 8 at Chicago's McCormick Place.

The new branding focuses on an "It's smART" theme, which combines smart business decisions directly with the art used to design, create and market products. Show signage and visuals will reflect the melding of smart thinking and smart design. Attendees will see large mobiles and grand portals with intersecting colored bars and semi-transparent panels showing designer drawings of products.

"The International Home + Housewares Show truly is a place where solid business relationships intersect with wonderfully designed products and thus, attending becomes a 'smART decision,'" explains Phil Brandl, president/CEO of IHA, which owns and operates the show. "Over the years as design and innovation have become important to the products the consumer wants, this trend has been reflected through special displays and programs to help attendees find new and innovative products. The new look with 'smART' innovation and 'ARTistic' design tells our story very directly."

Along with the new show look, IHA is refining the Expo names and making adjustments to some categories to address the supply and demand for booth space. These changes include:

- The Dine + Design Expo is now Dine + Décor and will include the categories tabletop, kitchen accessories + accents and cook + bakeware. The Gourmet Food/Savor Home category will be integrated into other appropriate categories.
- The Discover Design category will become an Expo and will move to the North Building. The new Discover Design Expo will encompass design-focused exhibitors from all show categories in one unique location, showcasing the best-of-the-best in design, function and innovation. Participation in the Discover Design Expo requires a review by a jury of retailers and designers.
- The Clean, Contain + Sustain Expo has been renamed Clean + Contain and will remain in the North Building and category lines will be realigned.
- The Global Crossroads Expo will be renamed the International Sourcing Expo and move to Level 1 of the North Building.

Further information about applying to exhibit or registering for an attendee badge is available at www.housewares.org.



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NY NOW open house spotlights key trends

Key trends in home and lifestyle design will be showcased in an exclusive "Open House" display to be presented at the summer 2015 edition of NY NOW, to be held August 15 to 19, at New York City's Jacob K. Javits Convention Center. The latest colours and concepts, as forecasted by the Pantone Color Institute, will be brought to life in a product display curated by Progressive Business Media editors and explored in more detail in a special on-site seminar.

Now in its fourth year, the 2015 Open House display will showcase four key themes – Bijoux, Ephemera, Footloose and Mixed Bag – taken from the PANTONEVIEW home + interiors 2016 colour forecast. Editors from *Home Accents Today*, *Home & Textiles Today*, *HFN* and *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, will review exhibitor submissions in each of these categories and select products

most representative of each trend for display.

The "Open House" trend display, located in the North Concourse, will be open Saturday, August 15, through Wednesday, August 19, 2015.

A related seminar, *Open House Seminar – What's Hot In Home*, sponsored by Progressive Business Media and Pantone, will be presented on Sunday, August 16, at 8:30 am. Speakers will include Warren Shoulberg of Progressive Business Media, Laurie Pressman of the Pantone Color Institute and others. Information and registration is available online at www.nynow.com/programs.

NY NOW's three comprehensive collections – HOME, LIFESTYLE and HANDMADE, as well as NEW! – encompass 100,000 products in myriad product categories. Attendees from all 50 states and around the world are expected. For a complete show preview, see page 90.

CanGift joins forces with jewellery expo

The Board of Directors of the Canadian Gift Association (CanGift) has announced an co-location initiative with the Canadian Jewellery Expo (CJ Expos) at the Fall 2015 Toronto Gift Fair.

Located in Hall 5 of The International Centre, the Canadian Jewellery Expo will run August 9 to August 11, overlapping the Toronto Gift Fair's first three show days. Each show will honour the other's visitor badge, facilitating a smooth method for buyers to visit both events. Jewellery buyers looking to expand their store categories will now be able to source a wide assortment of products from over 800 exhibitors at the Toronto Gift Fair.

New housewares exhibits for Atlanta

AmericasMart has announced the addition, expansion and relocation of several gourmet, tabletop and housewares related showrooms that will debut at the Atlanta International Gift & Home Furnishings Market, set for July 7 to 14.

New additions include Bradshaw International, Progressive, Core Home, Zrike, Block House, Mottahedeh, Guess & Company and A La Carte.

China fair reflects market's importance

Interior Lifestyle China will take place against a backdrop of changing lifestyles and increasing demand for overseas brands amongst Chinese consumers. Last year's fair attracted more than 21,000 visitors from 60 countries and regions and was the largest in the event's history, a reflection of the growing importance of this market in China. The 2015 show will take place at the Shanghai New International Expo Centre from September 17 to 19, 2015.

Interior Lifestyle China 2015 is organized by Messe Frankfurt (Shanghai). For more information about the fair, please visit www.il-china.com.

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Colour makes the difference

We're living in a highly visual world where colour can make all the difference in purchasing decisions, Leatrice (Lee) Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute, told delegates at her seminar entitled "Future Color/Design Trends: Innovation and Impact."

"It's all about innovation as far as color is concerned," said Eiseman. "We are living in a very competitive marketplace. Would-be consumers and/or clients are continuously being wooed by innovative uses of colour. They're imaginative, they're innovative and some are done so expertly and so beautifully that they come across as works of art."

Colour influences are coming from many directions including the entertainment industry and even the food industry, which is a new development.

Eiseman pointed out how children's movies are important indicators of future color trends. "The animators and graphic designers are right on the cutting edge as far as technology and color are concerned," she said. "The color combinations they use are fabulous and greatly inspiring."

Among the colour and design trends she shared are: the rising use of pastels, the juxtaposition of bright modern technology with classic romantic looks, the use of crowns as a traditional design motif and the continued popularity of owls, which represent whimsy and wisdom. In terms of materials, popular items include concrete, marble and ornamental studs as embellishments and metallics.

"Nothing has gotten more attention than copper and some of the brass effects," Eiseman said. "I'm not saying applications of other metallics are going away, but copper is really running way ahead as we go into 2016."

Other colour and design trends include industrial-looking hardware, unique usages of reclaimed materials, concentric shapes and woven applications.

At the seminar, Eiseman revealed the nine 2016 Pantone colour palettes.

- **Natural Forms.** Nature in its purest forms never ceases to instill a sense of wonder and awe. Whether present in flavor, fabric, texture or hue, there is no artifice involved. Natural surfaces are real and authentic, providing a sense of sustenance and reality. Colors include shades that are plucked from natural sources such as warm rosy clay, burnished rust, sheepskin beige, dense foliage greens, as well as a hearty plum wine tone and a glimmering copper.

- **Dichotomy.** Dichotomy reinforces the concept that ancient artifacts can live happily with cool contemporary shapes and shades. Subtle weathered green tones remind us of time-worn architecture, while gleaming silver metallic, sparkling, sunny yellow and bright cobalt blue combine in tandem with the more calming slate blues and jade or dark forest green, to create a refreshing modern day atmosphere.

- **Ephemera.** Softly tinted, breezy, lighter than air, and as transitory as an evanescent bubble, Ephemera expresses a lightness of colour that is often described as pastel. Colours such as Wan Blue, Pale Peach, Pink Dogwood, Tender Yellow, Orchid Ice, Frosted Almond and a clarifying white called "Cloud Dancer" more than aptly describe these charming tints.

- **Lineage.** Lineage implies a "family tree" conveying a more traditional style. But today's so-called "heritage" look often takes an unconventional adaptation, where a sense of whimsy can override a serious attitude. This is a palette where shades of navy, black, tan and a regimental green can co-mingle with stirring touches of Mars Red, Gentian Violet and Apricot Brandy.

- **Soft Focus.** In a place between pastels and mid-tones reside the colours that bridge the two. They are often married to a variety of other like shades, whether in layered or veiled patterning where, when used in combinations, one colour blends effortlessly into another. The palette called "Soft Focus" includes a nostalgic rose tone, a delicious Peach



Nougat, a warm tan and a blue Tourmaline. For a surprising bit of sparkle, a creamy gold tops off the palette.

- **Bijoux.** In the French language, Bijoux literally means "jewelry." A fitting title, as this is the palette that gleams with drama and intensity. Jewel tones such as Prism Pink, Amethyst, Topaz and Amber Yellow are artfully reflected or mirrored when juxtaposed next to equally striking tones of Violet, Dark Citron, Ember Glow, Rich Gold and a taupe that is one of the complex colours found within a tiger's eye.

- **Merriment.** This lively palette is where colour and design truly come out to play. The joyful "up" shades of the vibrant Classic Green and Mimosa Yellow seem even happier and more unique when they are mixed or contrasted with Super Pink, Cantaloupe and Orangeade as well as some down to earth neutrals like Sesame and Ginger Snap. A vivid turquoise, called Aquarius brings a note of retro influence into play.

- **Footloose.** This palette is about expressing the need to enjoy the freedom of the outdoors. Colours make for capricious combinations like Winter Pear and Strawberry Pink; Blazing Orange, Deep Periwinkle and Meadow Green, in addition to vacation-destination blues and blue-greens with tempting names like Capri and Vallarta Blue.

- **Mixed Bag.** A "mixed bag" is just that – an assortment of eclectic patterns and prints that are drawn primarily from diverse cultures and a multi-national influence. Some are familiar, like Pirate Black and Mandarin Red and others are more unique, demanding a second look. Violet and florid orange hues and a sultry hot pink with a robust wine tone are intriguingly complemented by a plush, mossy yellow-green.

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Why do we think boomers have stopped spending?

By Anthony Stokan

During the past decade profound changes have taken place in the specialty store, chain and shopping centre arenas. There have been many casualties across categories and retail continues to change and evolve on a daily basis. Loyalty is allusive, especially factoring in the new realities of e-commerce and social media.

Gone are the days of retailers and brands having all the power. Shopping today is about so much more than just the store. Even an ideal location doesn't guarantee success. In the new model of retail, consumers have all the power. With multiple shopping platforms they buy cautiously and want to be entertained and informed in store and online.

Today's consumers have exaggerated expectations. They want to feel understood and engaged, entertained and amused, surprised and delighted, flattered and appreciated, special and unique. It does not matter if the transaction is for a simple cup of coffee or a coffemaker. There are a plethora of choices in every category. Today you are competing in a universe of abundance. Attracting and keeping customers has never been more challenging.

The greatest challenge any retailer faces is staying relevant to their core customer. Fine-tuning the merchandise mix, attracting new customers as well as maintaining loyalty are all daunting tasks in the new technologically driven world of retail.

Understanding all the significant changes taking place in the marketplace is imperative. One must acknowledge the divide between the shopping and online behaviour of those under and



over 35 years of age and how they are relating to and responding to various technological evolutions.

The millennials are a fascinating 'tribe' by virtue of being the very first generation to have grown up in the digital age. They lack a cohesive understanding or connection to traditional communication models. Millennials are the segment of the population under 35, born between 1980 and the late 1990s. They make a significant contribution to the economy, particularly in mobile, tech and food category choices.

Many retail categories have anticipated a boom in business by catering to millennials but now is the time for a reality check! For millennials, the allure of "no ownership" is moving beyond housing and cars. A new 'industry' based on sharing or renting clothing, electronics and small appliances is springing up where there was nothing just five years ago. This tribe is a challenge for many categories because they are 'nowners', which can be a disruptive force at retail. They would rather borrow than buy.

Battered by student loan debt and the recession, millennials place less emphasis on owning and more on sharing, bartering and trading to access coveted

goods. These behaviors have propelled businesses such as car rental service Zipcar, taxi service Uber and home rental site Airbnb.

What millennials do buy, and keep, is their smartphones. Their phones are the doorway to the sharing economy. They are perpetually connected and are heavily engaged with social networks. They have grown up multi-tasking. They watch TV, engage in texting, reading their e-mail and often online simultaneously. Millennials consider it normal to always be connected.

While their parents may have clipped coupons to save money, millennials who have the income to buy new goods also see sharing and re-using as a way to promote environmental benefits.

Boomers and millennials want a different in-store experience. Boomers crave customer service while millennials want technology to make their shopping experiences frictionless. Boomers score higher in selecting a store based on the styles and brands they prefer. In specialty and department stores, boomers are much more likely to select a store based on the styles and brands they carry, rather than based on price. Boomers are also less likely to be price driven in the home fashion category.

If you want to grow your business, you should focus more on female boomers. Women within this group have been profoundly misrepresented in the media and largely ignored by marketing and advertising. Everything you've learned about this generation of women as consumers proves untrue as today they immerse themselves in the internet and, in the process, completely



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change up their consumer journey.

As a boomer, I have watched countless friends turn into Empty-Nesters. Most are eager to discard the impression they are 'behind the times' and are disengaged with consumerism and pop culture. In fact, most consider themselves independent thinkers who are the first to try new things.

Over the next decade they represent a huge opportunity for both the housewares and home fashion sectors as some of these couples downsize and others renovate and re-decorate. For most Empty-Nesters, the next decade will be spent indulging themselves and making their homes more comfortable. They have spent the past few decades focusing on career and family and are ready to move forward.

This shift represents a huge opportunity to engage with the mature consumer and develop a relationship based on pinterest pages, a blog, tightly focused e-blasts and themed in-store

events. Engage them, simplify their lives, provide a hassle-free shopping environment and an abundance of product knowledge about what your selling.

The Empty-Nesters I know are confident, tech-savvy, and highly connected online, yet marketers still stereotype them as passively consuming traditional media. Empty-Nesters are embracing social media and today's online recommendation culture, ignoring a lot of traditional advertising and completely re-defining their consumer journey.

The Empty-Nester purchase path has moved online, with Google becoming the first stop along the way. Even if an Empty-Nester learns about a product offline, she will research online to find information, reviews, and deals. The new normal for the majority of Empty-Nesters is to search for items online through Google or other search engines before making a spending decision.

For this generation, first-person reviews play a key role in their purchas-

ing. The majority of Empty-Nesters are more likely to purchase a product if it receives a high star rating in a retail e-commerce review. In addition, the décor and food blogs followed by Empty-Nesters means they are more likely to purchase a product recommended by a blogger they follow.

Marketers and retailers, in their rush for youth, have all but abandoned the generation with the most disposable income. Boomers consider themselves to be eternally young. They are tech savvy and own the latest devices. The Empty-Nesters among them have the time to read reviews and shop online. If you want boomers to embrace your offering create a retail environment where she feels valued and delighted.

Anthony Stokan has been a retail and shopping centre expert, consultant, speaker and writer for more than three decades. Visit info@anthonyrussellinc.com



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At home on the lake



In laid-back Kelowna, B.C., Ben and Sue Boschman have created an inviting retail retreat with a perfect balance of service, selection and ambience

By Jane Zatylny



Walk through the front door of Lakehouse Home Store in downtown Kelowna, B.C. and you'll feel like you're entering the home of a close friend – one, that is, with very good taste. The inviting 4,200-square-foot space feels warm, curated, and very personal. A soulful Diana Krall tune plays softly in the background as customers stream into the store on a late spring afternoon, meandering across expansive hardwood floors, past distressed cabinets, and sofas piled high with oversized cushions.

On the opposite side of the store, shelves weighted with rainbow-hued tableware, high-end appliances, and gleaming stainless steel cookware beckon browsers. Reflecting the laid back vibe of the largest city on sparkling Okanagan Lake is all part of the master-plan for founders and owners Ben and Sue Boschman.

"People move to Kelowna for the lifestyle, and we wanted to reflect that with our store," explains Ben. "Our idea was to combine the gourmet kitchen side of things with home décor, and put it all together like the ingredients in a good recipe."

Ben got his start in retail at age 18, when he started a video store business called TVS (The Video Superstore) in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan with his 28-year-old uncle as partner. "It was in the early 1980s," he says. "Everyone thought the industry was fly-by-night. We thought differently."

While competitors were opening new outlets and "just slapping fixtures on the wall," Ben and his partner had other ideas. "We decided to add some class to the business," he explains. "We tried to balance excellence in customer service, location, selection, and décor in our existing locations, and we exceeded the customers' expectations. We ended up with eight stores, in Saskatoon and Winnipeg. They were actually some of the highest grossing video stores in North America."

In 1996, Ben and his partner sold their video business to

Lakehouse owner Ben Boschman was trained as an architect and partner Sue studied interior design before going into retail.

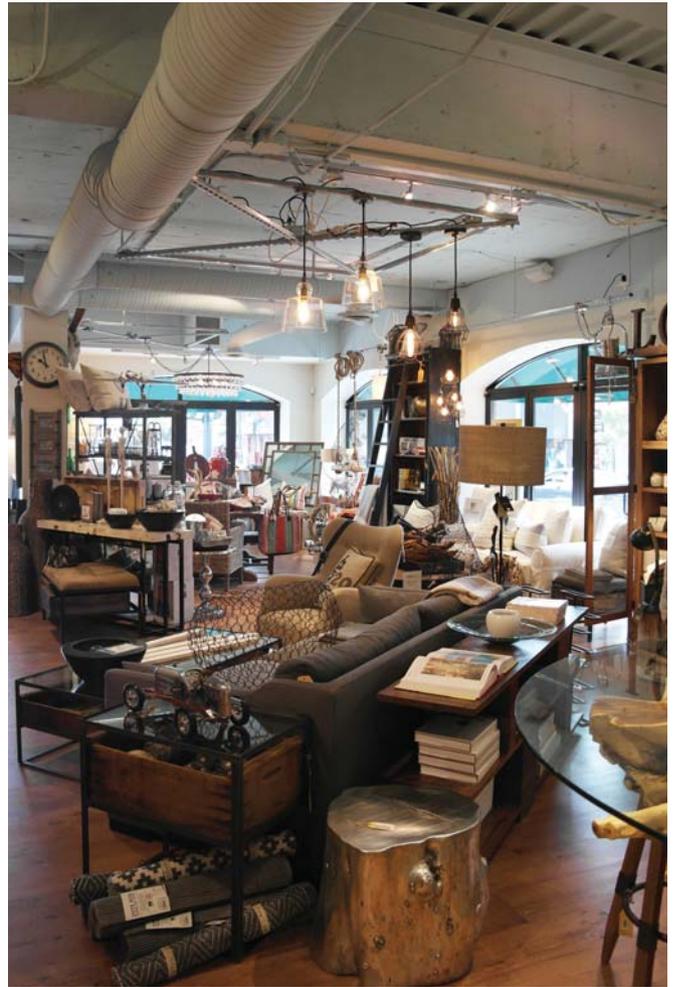


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Retail Profile: Lakehouse Home Store



Rogers and he and Sue opened two new stores in Banff and Canmore, which he operated until 2008. They also built several high-end residences in the Bow Valley.

"I learned the value of the synergy that comes when service, selection, concept, décor, location are all in harmony," he says. "I also learned I wanted to get into a business with more longevity."

In 2009, Sue and Ben moved to B.C., where Ben studied architecture and Sue, interior design. In 2010, they began to refine their home store concept.

"The many gorgeous upscale homes in the Okanagan were an inspiration to us," explains Ben. "We determined there were very few upscale shopping experiences to match those homes, and many brands just weren't available here. We felt there was an opportunity for a high-quality lifestyle store similar to the retail experiences in Calgary and Vancouver."

In winter 2010, the couple travelled to

industry trade shows in Las Vegas, Toronto, Chicago, Seattle, North Carolina, and San Francisco, where they explored product lines, met suppliers, and refined their concept of a gourmet kitchen store that would also offer furniture, home accents, and giftware.

"We were like kids in a candy store," Ben recalls. Then in December 2011, they opened Lakehouse on an iconic corner in the heart of the downtown core, just three blocks from the beach.

The early days were not without chal-

lenges. Ben thought he was a seasoned businessman, but was shocked by some of the difficulties they encountered. The first one nearly derailed their plans altogether. While setting up the store in November 2011, they stored the cardboard in an adjacent parkade and someone actually threw a Molotov cocktail into that pile of cardboard. Thankfully, the fire department was only two blocks away and there was no damage to the store.

Despite the initial scare, the location was prime, and so was the brick-faced building, a former Royal Bank built in 1910. But sadly, Kelowna's downtown had seen better days. Over the years, most of the city's retailers had relocated to either side of the highway that leads downtown from the airport.

"There was a reason why this location became vacant," says Ben, "but we knew the downtown was slated for a renovation."





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Retail Profile: Lakehouse Home Store

That renovation, however, turned into a \$14 million headache. Construction began the first fall after Lakehouse opened, and the project took two and a half years to complete.

"They did it block by block, and each block took three months," says Ben. "They did our block twice. They tried to save the businesses from pain, but it kept everyone away anyway. It cost us so much money."

Now, as Lakehouse enters its first summer since the end of the construction, traffic is up, and the future looks very bright for downtown Kelowna. "They did a really nice job with the wide sidewalks and trees," says Ben.

The reception from customers when they experience the store for the first time has been very gratifying, he adds. "I knew enough about business to know that we had an interesting formula. The common reaction we hear every day is, "Why don't we have a store like this at home?"

Ben and Sue track trends by attending trade shows and listening to their customers. "The wonderful part of this business is that your vendors are also doing that for you," he says.

He deals with about 100 suppliers, and keeps about 5,000 skus in store at any given time. A 2,500-square-foot warehouse a few blocks away keeps stock at the ready, and a part-time merchandiser replenishes displays and keeps them looking top notch.

On the gourmet kitchen side of the



store, products are merchandised on slat wall and fixed wall shelves, rolling baker racks, and custom-made maple shelving with recycled glass accent panels.

"When we were designing the store, we worked with a Vancouver retail designer," says Ben. "When you find someone who can really work well with some of your weaknesses, that's when you hit the sweet spot."

Home décor pieces, like tables and cabinets, are used selectively for displays in the kitchen side of the store. The mix works well because it synergizes needs and wants. Décor is more want-based, Ben explains. "But the utilitarian notion of the gourmet kitchen, where everyone is on the prowl for a new garlic press or to replace a wooden spoon, is need-based. Everyone loves this store: men, women, teenagers. No one is afraid to come in here."

While Lakehouse primarily targets

design and food-minded Okanagan residents, tourists and weekenders – including off-season hockey players and celebrities – are an important part of the business."

They're far more impulsive," says Ben. "They're buying things they think are a unique find that they can take home with them."

The store does offer shipping, and staff are sure to make all of their customers aware of this service. When September begins, the kitchen area is restocked for the Christmas season. These products are more typical of most gourmet kitchen stores.

Ordering for the home décor side can be frustrating at times, he admits. "Suppliers increase prices without telling customers. You have to log onto their websites and really keep your eye on things."

The best suppliers, he says, are the ones who have in some way found a way to stay connected to his customers. "The ones who get it are golden. It really tells you something about their company."

Over the last year, he and Sue have narrowed the inventory to the categories and brands that work best with their concept, and throughout the store, that curation is evident. "We do a lot in here, and that's been part of the challenge," says Ben. "In the furniture business, it's different. A chaise lounge can represent an entire line by a company, and can provide the context that the customer needs to special order a sectional."



The store is situated just blocks from the beach in the heart of Kelowna, B.C. which recently underwent a dramatic, and costly, renovation.



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Retail Profile: Lakehouse Home Store

Lakehouse employs eight people, a mix of full of part-time staff who are “generalists who specialize,” says Ben. “They like one another and get along well. Part of what our customers enjoy about us is that we feel real.”

When customers first enter Lakehouse, they tend to take a “racetrack approach,” circling their way around the store. Staff greet customers, and try to make them feel comfortable by allowing them to browse.

In the cook’s tools section at the front of the store, slat wall offers all the essentials from Cuisipro, OXO Good Grips, RSVP, and others. Included in the mix are stylish, innovative pieces, like the chef’s bottles and roasting laurel from Prepara and the colourful colanders and space-saving Nest measuring spoons from Joseph Joseph. Sodastream, Peugeot peppermills, and pod coffee machines are marketed in this area as well, along with a wide selection of cutting boards from John Boos, Epicurean, Europe2You, and other suppliers. Knife sets and blocks at a variety of price points are also displayed here; premium sets from Wüsthof, Shun, and Laguiole gleam from behind a glass cabinet. Cookware sets from All-Clad occupy prime real estate, alongside pieces from Staub, Le Creuset, Lodge, and others.

A handsome John Boos kitchen island, also for sale, displays manual juicers and Vitamix blenders. Lakehouse offers an expansive selection of kitchen electrics, from griddles, mixers, food processors, and waffle makers, to slow cookers, steamers, toaster ovens – even Sous Vide water ovens. Breville is a prominent brand in this area, alongside Kitchen Aid, Bamix (from Browne) and Dualit toasters.

The sales counter and demonstration kitchen are situated back-to-back in the centre of the store, and are also used for display. Espresso/cappuccino makers from Saeco and Nespresso are displayed on the recycled glass kitchen counter, near the bakeware department. On the far side of the sales counter, another glass cabinet houses delicate wine decanters from Eisch, Legnoart, and



Riedel, a nod to local oenophiles. Bar glasses, wine tools, serveware, and stemware are also displayed in this area.

A colourful array of Le Creuset tableware and accessories, massed out on shelves, colour by glorious colour, draws customers towards the expansive rear section of the store. “Le Creuset really works well in our store,” says Ben. “When you introduce a turquoise peppermill into a neutral kitchen it really adds a vibrant touch of fashion.”

On the home décor side, driftwood tables, distressed furniture, and soft throws and cushions in neutral colours are coupled with candles, lighting fixtures and lamps, wall art, soft furniture,

The store features a blend of housewares, lifestyle, home decor and giftware items. Many products are displayed in vintage cabinets.

like chairs and sofas, and a selection of greeting cards. Together, in harmony with the gourmet kitchen side of the store, the concept conjures up a powerful sense of home and cottage. “We’re trying to evoke images of sunsets, family gatherings, great food, friends, and making memories,” explains Ben.

Lakehouse participates in promo pricing offered by its vendors, but doesn’t hold traditional sales. “When we tried a clearance table, customers just walked on by,” says Ben. Unwanted merchandise is donated to Habitat for Humanity and a local thrift store that supports a women’s shelter. The store also offers a customer rewards program through a VIP membership.

The web store is an important part of the business for Lakehouse, and as their business matures, Sue and Ben are also focussing their attention on offering design services to builders and new homeowners to leverage their many vendors. While Sue will continue to be the face of Lakehouse, she will move more into this role in the future, while Ben will continue to work in the head office, as GM and buyer.

“We always wanted to position Sue as the owner. She’s the most knowledgeable about our products whereas I’m



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Retail Profile: Vinca's Kitchen

has since tripled the inventory and sales have increased tenfold.

She has also learned a few lessons along the way, primarily the importance of integrity in business.

"You must be accountable for everything you do and everything you say. She would advise any new retailer to be gutsy in this business. "If something doesn't work out, don't be afraid to try something else or start over."

As part of her commitment to customer service, Alviene makes sure her

employees understand how to use a product correctly. She provides product knowledge training meetings on a regular basis. They are each given a product to research, and then they do a presentation in front of all the staff.

Though she has considered offering cooking classes, for now Alviene is happy just hanging out at Vinca's Kitchen. "I love my work so much, I don't need more time at home," she says. "I have a great store manager, so I can take time off if I need it."

Married for 27 years with three grown daughters, Alviene says she is in a very good place right now. All three daughters help at the shop and Vinca's Kitchen has created a scholarship fund offered to a high school graduate who wants to continue their studies in the culinary field.

The store also contributes to local school and sport team events and Alviene sits on the Executive Board of the Ladner Business Association where she volunteers at many events.

"Thinking back to my own childhood, I guess I always had that entrepreneurial side to me," says Alviene. "If I wanted something, I would go after it, just like I did with this business. My parents were hard workers who ran a grain and dairy farm. Dad brought his family to Canada in 1992 to give his children a better life. I am so grateful for the sacrifice he made to leave Brazil as it led me down the path I am on now."

Sadly, Alviene's father passed away in November of 1994. While he never had the chance to see his family blossom in Canada, she knows he is looking down with a big smile on his face. (She has siblings in B.C., Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Brazil and Bangkok. They all get together once a year to reconnect.)

Alviene learned from her mother's refusal to buy her nail polish that if she wanted something, she had to make it happen herself. Buying a kitchen shop during a recession turned out to be perfect timing for someone so determined to succeed. For Alviene Wilkins, proud daughter of two hard working immigrants, 2008 proved to be a very good year. 🍷



A spectacular chandelier adorned with forks, knives and spoons welcomes customers to Vinca's Kitchen.



Retail Profile: Lakehouse Home Store



Vitamix blenders are a countertop feature, left, while one entire wall is devoted to gadgets. The store carries a range of cookware and electrics.

more in the backend," he explains.

With their young daughter, Sylvie, still in school, Ben and Sue have made a very conscious decision to design a business that would allow them to expand their offerings out of their one iconic location. "Our overall focus will be to just keep working on the square foot dollars," Ben says.

Their own relationship is also a priority. Ben was raised in a retail business family, and understands the importance of not bringing work home. To keep it that way, he and Sue have a penalty jar: if one of them brings up a work matter after hours, they have to pay into it.

While he admits that the first couple of years were "pretty overwhelming," the customers' reaction to the store makes it all worthwhile.

"Our objective is to have customers for life," he says. "When I see them engaging with the concept, it's really gratifying. We're not worried about making the sale. We're worried about them, and about them being part of the Lakehouse story for years to come. It always comes back to the diversity of our client base."

Like the vintners in the Valley with their prize-winning wines, Ben says he and Sue want to build a business that improves with age. "I don't ever want to retire," he concludes. "I want something I'll enjoy doing forever." 🐾

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Taking a leap of faith

Despite opening during a retail recession, Alviene Wilkins was determined to make her first big business venture a success

By Denise Gaze

The year 2008 was the beginning of an economic downturn in retail. For Alviene Wilkins, it was the year she began a brand new business venture after buying Cobblestone Cottage, a kitchen shop in the quaint village of Ladner, British Columbia. Historic Ladner is home to about 20,000 people, and Alviene would not want to live or work anywhere else.

Growing up in a farming community in Brazil, Alviene was the third of eight children raised in a German-speaking home. Her education, however, was all in Portuguese. It was while at school she remembers making her first sale – at the tender age of 10.

“I wanted a bottle of nail polish,” Alviene recalls. “So I started cooking fudge and popcorn at home, and then

brought it to school to sell to the other students. I even advertised at school the day before so the kids would remember to bring their money.”

Prior to working at Cobblestone Cottage, Alviene, who came to Canada as a

Shown above, Alviene Wilkins, owner of Vinca’s Kitchen in Ladner, B.C.



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Retail Profile: Vinca's Kitchen

tourist in 1983, worked as a nanny for three years before applying for residency. But it was during her time working at U Brew – where customers make their own wine – that she really developed a passion for retail.

“I spent a lot of time at U Brew guiding people through the wine making experience, the fermentation process and then the bottling,” Alviene says. “I just loved working with the customers.

After 10 years at U Brew, Alviene started working at Cobblestone Cottage. When the owner decided to sell, Alviene did not hesitate to make an offer. Even though the timing wasn't perfect and sales were down, she had always wanted her own business.

“I knew what I was getting into”, says Alviene. “But I had a vision. I knew the potential, I knew the community and I could see it all coming together.”

Cobblestone Cottage had been operating for 30 years so Alviene saw no reason to change the name. However, when she incorporated she found out that, since it was only a registered business, the name Cobblestone Cottage was no longer available. Forced to come up with a new name, Alviene immediately thought of the pet name her father had given her as a child – Vinca – and renamed the store ‘Vinca's Kitchen’.

Alviene settled into her new role of business owner at age 47 and started to make the store her own. After five years at the original location, she was ready to move to a bigger building up the street.

“I am really happy with the way things turned out. Having to change the store name to ‘Vinca's’ gives me that link to my dad,” says Alviene. “Once we moved to our new location, I felt I had taken a leap of faith to make this business truly mine.”

Belena Novak of Octagon Marketing has witnessed Alviene's growth. “It is always a pleasure to work with Alviene. We have watched her business grow steadily and her new, larger store is a testimony of her success.”

One of Alviene's biggest supporters was her sister, Waltraud Neufeld, who lives about an hour away in Abbotsford.



The interior of Vinca's Kitchen covers about 2,000 square feet with a centre cash desk.

“My sister would come out once a week to help me, and she enjoyed it so much,” explains Alviene. “One year I took her to the Toronto Gift Fair, and that was enough to convince her she had to open up a kitchen store too!”

Encouraged by Alviene, Waltraud did just that in 2011, opening Cobblestone Kitchenware in Abbotsford at the age of 54.

Alviene and her sister help each other out if one has a product that the other's customer is looking for. The sisters will simply get in their cars and drive it over. But Alviene stresses “I could not do this without the help of my terrific staff. I have eight part time staff and they are like family to me. I have never advertised, each one was hired through word of mouth.”

“One of my staff came to me recently and said ‘I was driving by the store with friends and I just had to stop and look in. I want you to know I am so proud to work here’,” she relays.

Vinca's new location is approximately 2,000 square feet and carries 10,000 SKUs. Many of the suppliers Alviene works with have become friends over the years and she is proud of the part-

nerships she enjoys with vendors.

Port-Style's B.C. sales representative Fred Box says, “I started doing business with Alviene back in 2008. I watched her increase the selection of products and grow the business to the point where she had to expand. She listens to suggestions and is courteous and professional to deal with.”

Rob and Cindy Liebermann, sales agents for Trudeau, add: “We have had a wonderful relationship with Alviene over the past four years. She's a true professional who is always willing to make an appointment and provide feedback on new products. Alviene prides herself on providing outstanding customer service and in depth knowledge on the products she carries.”

One reason Alviene has been able to thrive even though retail sales have been declining is the location of Vinca's.

“We are right in the middle of a little shopping village,” says Alviene. “In the original store, we carried more china and catered to an older crowd. Now we have a more practical kitchen store that attracts a younger customer base, while maintaining my older loyal customers.”

Alviene's customers are so loyal that

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Retail Profile: Vinca's Kitchen

some of them literally pitched in and helped her make the move from Cobblestone Cottage to the new location.

"Because we are a small community we support each other. I also feel very accountable for what I sell, so I look beyond the latest must have. I try to please all level of customers," she explains.

Although a mega mall is under construction about 10 kilometres away, Alviene remains unfazed about looming competition from either big box stores or American online sites.

"I am certain we are going to be fine," she says. "We offer competitive prices and my loyal customers have always been smart enough to factor in U.S. pricing and the time they have to wait plus the shipping costs. They do the math, and buy from me.

Despite the challenges today, for Alviene, the best part of being a retailer is the joy she feels serving the customers who walk through her door. She loves their feedback, which is something you do not get with online sales. Vinca's does have a website, but Alviene has no current plans to sell through it.

"I decided that for the amount of work that is involved, the packing, the shipping, the cost of warehousing and maintaining the website was not worth it for me," explains Alviene. "I know selling online is an important part of business today, but at the moment, I am fine with the way things are."

Alviene may not be selling online, but she is no stranger to social media, which she uses regularly to promote her store.

Browne sales rep Mike Henn of Mike Henn Agencies explains: "Alviene is ahead of her time in so many ways. She was one of our first customers to have a Facebook page. She is a master of networking, and constantly brainstorming with her staff. We could not get over how fast they sold our Kitchen Grips trivets."

Alviene's admits one of the reasons they did well was because "we also sold them as a good base for curling irons!"

Her approach to business has changed a lot since Alviene first began. Though she started small at first, she



Business has increased tenfold since Alviene took over the store and moved to an expanded location. Vinca's Kitchen now carries over 10,000 SKUs.





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Retail Profile: Vinca's Kitchen

has since tripled the inventory and sales have increased tenfold.

She has also learned a few lessons along the way, primarily the importance of integrity in business.

"You must be accountable for everything you do and everything you say. She would advise any new retailer to be gutsy in this business. "If something doesn't work out, don't be afraid to try something else or start over."

As part of her commitment to customer service, Alviene makes sure her

employees understand how to use a product correctly. She provides product knowledge training meetings on a regular basis. They are each given a product to research, and then they do a presentation in front of all the staff.

Though she has considered offering cooking classes, for now Alviene is happy just hanging out at Vinca's Kitchen. "I love my work so much, I don't need more time at home," she says. "I have a great store manager, so I can take time off if I need it."

Married for 27 years with three grown daughters, Alviene says she is in a very good place right now. All three daughters help at the shop and Vinca's Kitchen has created a scholarship fund offered to a high school graduate who wants to continue their studies in the culinary field.

The store also contributes to local school and sport team events and Alviene sits on the Executive Board of the Ladner Business Association where she volunteers at many events.

"Thinking back to my own childhood, I guess I always had that entrepreneurial side to me," says Alviene. "If I wanted something, I would go after it, just like I did with this business. My parents were hard workers who ran a grain and dairy farm. Dad brought his family to Canada in 1992 to give his children a better life. I am so grateful for the sacrifice he made to leave Brazil as it led me down the path I am on now."

Sadly, Alviene's father passed away in November of 1994. While he never had the chance to see his family blossom in Canada, she knows he is looking down with a big smile on his face. (She has siblings in B.C., Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Brazil and Bangkok. They all get together once a year to reconnect.)

Alviene learned from her mother's refusal to buy her nail polish that if she wanted something, she had to make it happen herself. Buying a kitchen shop during a recession turned out to be perfect timing for someone so determined to succeed. For Alviene Wilkins, proud daughter of two hard working immigrants, 2008 proved to be a very good year. 🍷



A spectacular chandelier adorned with forks, knives and spoons welcomes customers to Vinca's Kitchen.



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Stovetop cookware

What's hot in stovetop cookware, skillets and fry pans



A favourite of cooks all over the world, the classic Spanish paella is as delicious as it is beautiful. This new pan from **Cuisinart** boasts superior heat construction for even heat distribution, a premium non-stick interior and ergonomically designed stainless steel handles. Its traditional design with flared sides and dimpled interior is ideal for a caramelized paella crust. Its versatile performance allows it to be used on induction cooktops, or in the oven.

Victorinox will debut the IQ range of cookware from Scanpan at the August gift show, made of 100% recycled aluminum. The patented ceramic titanium non-stick surface is safe for all kitchen utensils, even metal. The pressure-cast aluminum body allows for higher-heat applications including induction and oven roasting up to 260°C/500°F. The handles are permanently attached with heavy-duty, stainless steel rivets and designed with a sturdy V-connection to keep them cool longer.



KitchenAid is launching several exciting new premium cookware lines in Canada this year. The range includes 5-ply and 7-ply stainless steel sets (left), hard-anodized non-stick sets (below) and a gorgeous copper line, right. Each piece is safe for use on induction cooktops and designed for dishwasher cleanability. The pans feature liquid level measuring marks on the interior and welded stainless handles.





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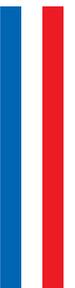
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Stovetop cookware

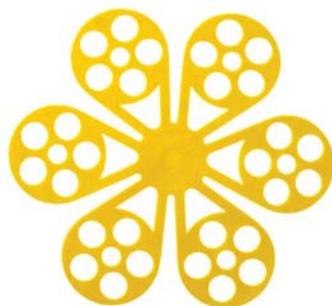
Red Diamond, one of **Paderno's** most durable non-stick coatings, is now applied with a unique black and red sparkle colour. The pans are safe for induction cooktops and are PFOA-free with a stainless steel riveted handle.



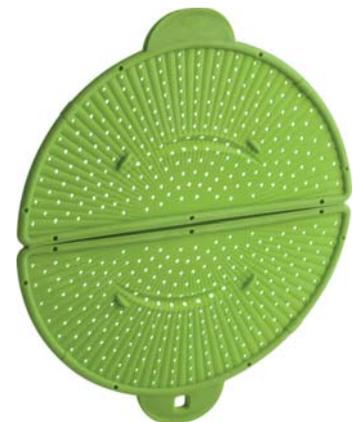
The Swiss Diamond Edge Pan from **Browne & Co.** features a sleek silhouette design with a patented diamond reinforced non-stick coating and an aluminum body that will not warp. The pans are oven-safe to 500°F with an ergonomic handle and limited lifetime warranty.



All-Clad's Oval Gratin pan, above, has shallow sides and a larger surface that's also ideal for roasting or hot dips. With its simple elegance, this piece can easily go from stovetop to table. Also new from All-Clad is this 16-quart extra-large stockpot offers the generous capacity needed for home canning and preserving. This versatile pan can also be used for large-scale entertaining and family meals. A new Oval Roaster has high straight sides and large surface area to accommodate larger cuts of meat. It comes with an insert rack with lifting handles for easy food removal and it's induction compatible.



Colourful Campana flower "petals" from **Cuisivin**, left, can protect all kinds of cookware. They can also be used as a separator to stack cookware inside drawers or cupboards without fear of scratching the non-stick coating. Also new from Cuisivin is the innovative Vapsi wok and multi-purpose steam pot. Shown below, by inserting the perforated rack, users can fry and steam at the same time. It can also heat or defrost food using a patented multilayer, honeycomb structure with a ceramic base.



This 3-in1 multi-purpose splatter screen from **Trudeau** can be used as a trivet or pot drainer. It fits up to 11-inch diameter pots. The stainless steel structure makes it easy to handle and it can be easily folded for convenient storage.

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Stovetop cookware

Port-Style is launching the innovative new Stellar cookware line from Horwood Tate. The 'draining' pots feature unique low profile stacking lids and easy-to-read internal measuring guide. Efficient hot forged bases provide even heat distribution on all stove tops and are oven safe to 180°C.

The cookware is designed for easy, one-handed draining while the lid is still on. Easy to clean and dishwasher safe, the cookware comes gift-boxed.

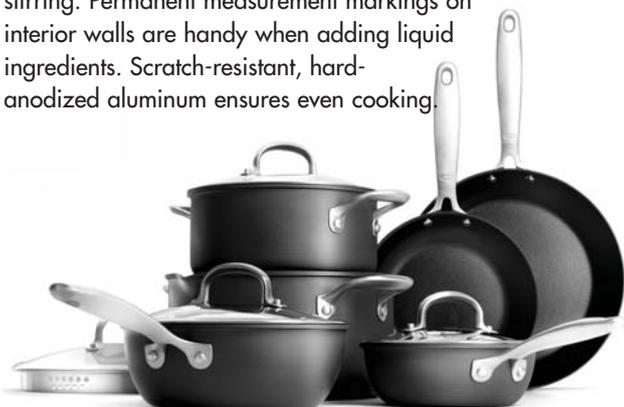


Orly Cuisine will be launching two new Quantanium pans from Strauss this year. The oval roaster, left, has a tempered glass lid and is made of high quality cast aluminum. The eco-friendly non-stick coating by Whitford is PFOA-free. The new crepe pan, below, is ready for induction with a cast body. The pan provides efficient, even heat distribution and has a comfortable, ergonomic handle that will not warp.

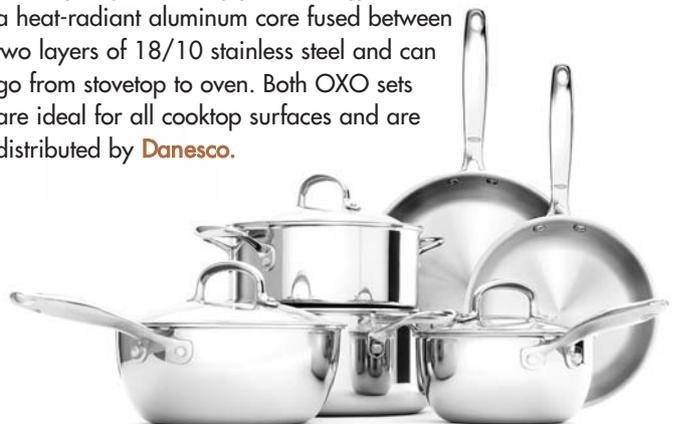


Lacor Chef Luxe cookware by **Gontara** has an 18/10 stainless steel body and an extra-thick, reinforced edge that allows for perfect pouring. The pans have a double thickness bottom and satin finish inside and out with a mirror-finish edge. Handles are made from welded, air-tight, 18/10 stainless steel, heat-resistant and ergonomic tube.

OXO Good Grips is unveiling a new line of Non-Stick Pro cookware created with a German-engineered, PFOA-free 3-layer coating. Each piece is designed with comfortable, stay-cool handles, drip-free pouring edges angled side walls to help liquids evaporate quickly and rounded bottoms that facilitate stirring. Permanent measurement markings on interior walls are handy when adding liquid ingredients. Scratch-resistant, hard-anodized aluminum ensures even cooking.



Also new from OXO, the Good Grips Stainless Steel Pro line combines the durability of stainless steel with the superior heat retention of aluminum. Each piece offers all the same convenient features as the Non-Stick Pro, from stay-cool handles to drip-free pouring edges. The 3-ply technology features a heat-radiant aluminum core fused between two layers of 18/10 stainless steel and can go from stovetop to oven. Both OXO sets are ideal for all cooktop surfaces and are distributed by **DanESCO**.



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Cookware



Counseltron's made in the USA 12-inch square grill pan by Lodge has a modern design with a large cooking surface and convenient slanted sides. The ribbed design allows grease to drain away from the food. It is also great for making sandwiches and Paninis. Also new is this round frypan from Lodge. Both are seasoned and ready to use right out of the box. They can go in the oven, on the stove, on the grill or over a campfire.



The Wood-Be cookware series by Green-Pan has a warm woodprint on the Bakelite handle, an elegant unicolour coating and a Thermolon healthy ceramic non-stick surface, manufactured without PFOA. Suitable for all stovetops, excluding induction, it's distributed by **Jascor Housewares**.



ATK puts cast iron skillets to the test

America's Test Kitchen recently tested and put its recommendation seal on three tried and true kitchen staples: cast-iron skillets. *America's Test Kitchen* tested 10 different brands of 12-inch cast-iron skillets for durability and performance and offered three recommendations for Best Traditional, Best Enameled, and Best Buy.

To test the pans, the Test Kitchen cooked eggs, made acidic sauces, fried foods, baked corn bread, transferred foods from stovetop to oven all the while performing taste tests in between. To test durability, they dropped hot pans in ice cold water, scraped the surface with knives and metal utensils, banged utensils against the sides and then again re-tested the pans for cooking and non-stick properties.

Ultimately the company found that several enameled skillets did not offer the same life-long nonstick properties as traditional cast-iron, and that some surface enamels can crack under high temperatures.

"Both enamel and traditional cast-iron will provide great heat retention and browning. It's really a matter of different cooking styles," says Lisa McManus of *America's Test Kitchen*. "If seasoning traditional cast iron still seems scary, paying more up front for an enamel pan is worth it."

The top two recommendations are the Lodge Classic 12-inch cast iron skillet and the Le Creuset Signature 11 3/4-inch iron handle skillet.

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Thirst quenchers

The latest in soda machines, beverage systems and water filters

Soda makers prepare to battle a heavyweight

By Dave Adamchick, The NPD Group

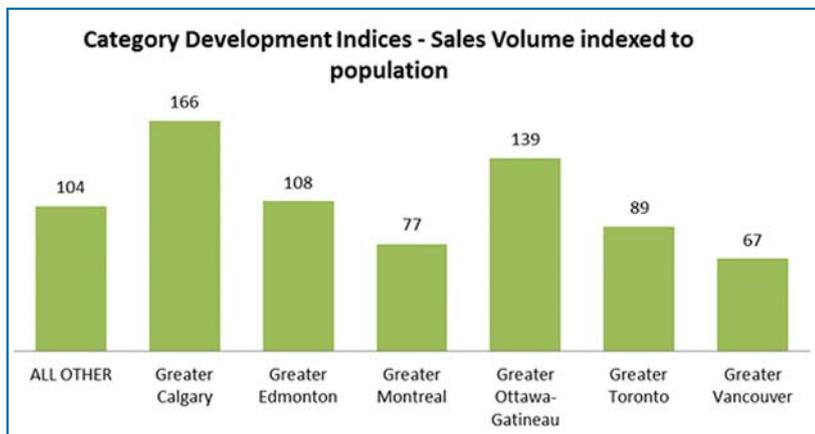
Summer is here, and that means it's the perfect time to think about pouring a refreshing cold beverage as the weather heats up. Many consumers are now going to their soda machines on their counters, rather than lugging home bottles from the local grocery store.

Soda machines have been a fast growth area in small appliances, led by Soda Stream of course. As of May 2015, sales of machines, syrups, carafes and carbonators year over year are up 12%, while sales of the carbonators are up 80%. Machine sales have slowed a little over the same period (-18%), impacted partly by lower average prices. Carbonator growth has outpaced growth in the flavor syrups – indicating that many consumers might be using their machines for carbonated water, or adding their own flavouring.

Keurig has announced it will be entering the market later this year with a cold beverage machine. The launch is in partnership with Coca Cola so we can expect this space to heat up later in 2015 as a soft drink heavyweight starts licensing popular flavors directly from the soda aisle of the supermarket.

Across Canada, there are interesting differences in soda machine purchasing. Sales of machines, carafes, syrups and carbonators are stronger in the West with Greater Calgary being the strongest market. That's followed by Greater Ottawa-Gatineau, and less so in the greater Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver areas. Sales figures also index slightly higher outside of these major urban areas.

It will be interesting to see what happens in the Canadian market when Keurig rolls out their machine, and the category continues to develop.



Versatile and portable, the Mosa Soda Splash from **Browne & Co.** is a high-end carbonating device. Safe and easy to use, the wide opening allows for the addition of ice and fruit to the mixture. You can increase the amount of carbonation by adding more chargers to mix. The attractive, durable stainless steel carafe is dishwasher safe. The threaded storage stopper provides a tight seal and the unit can be stored in fridge for later consumption. The Mosa can turn plain water into sparkling water in seconds. Use it with pure water or any combination of mixtures or with syrups, juices, wine and more. It also makes the perfect bar companion. Mosa CO2 chargers are sold separately. It's available in two sizes and includes carafe, funnel, stopper and charger holder.



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Keurig set to jump into soda category

A new Keurig single-serve soda maker set to launch later this year in the U.S., followed by Canada, is expected to be a hotter item than the company's dominant coffee brewer, according to Coca-Cola Co. CEO Muhtar Kent.

The device, developed by Keurig Green Mountain with help from investor Coca-Cola, will allow consumers to mix individual branded soft drinks at home. Keurig will market the devices along with flavor pods that produce a carbonation-inducing chemical reaction when injected with water. Keurig Cold will complement Keurig's home coffee brewer, which also uses pods.

Soda sales in the U.S. have declined for 10 straight years, hurt by concerns about excess sugar and artificial sweeteners. Technology like Keurig Cold is among the strategies Atlanta-based Coca-Cola will use to keep people sipping while also attracting new drinkers, Kent said. Keurig coffee brewers are in 20 million U.S. households, according to the company.

"It's all about the choice," Kent says. "This allows a practicality for consumers to take more choices to their homes, whether it's mixers or whether it's sparkling drinks or whether it's distilled drinks."

Kent claims he likes what he has seen so far of the machines and pods, including price, materials and design.

Coca-Cola's hope for Keurig Cold's success rides on more than the pods. Through an entity it calls Atlantic Industries, Coca-Cola is Keurig Green Mountain's largest shareholder, with a 16% stake. Keurig and the world's biggest soda maker are working under a 10-year agreement signed in February 2014 to collaborate on the device.



The Aquasana powered water filtration system from **Salton** delivers delicious, clean water in seconds.

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Perfect for parties and buffets, this acrylic beverage dispenser from **InterContinental Mercantile** features a non-drip, easy pull spout for dispensing everything from lemonade to fresh water. This beverage dispenser offers the ultimate in drink services for busy events. The unit is shatter-proof with a removable ice core and a fruit infuser. There is ice storage in base to keep drinks cold. The dispenser also has a dual function cylinder that serves as ice rod and fruit infuser.



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Casual dining

New designs in dinnerware, flatware and tabletop textiles



London fashion designer Ted Baker has partnered with **Portmeirion** to launch two dinnerware collections based on his 2015 lines. As seen on our cover this month, the collections include a 41-piece bone china range with a vintage floral motif and a 22-piece giftware range.



David Shaw is now the exclusive Canadian distributor for LSA International, one of Europe's leading brands of contemporary handmade glass and porcelain. The gift-boxed Dine collection is a stylish and versatile collection combining white porcelain and oak from sustainable sources as well as a range of glassware. The collection blends classic and modern design.



The new Peveril collection from **Denby** is perfect for every day or entertaining. It's inspired by the deep inky hues of the rare John Blue mineral found in the world famous Peak District caves and caverns. Textured shapes, a contrasting nature-inspired pattern and two reactive glossy glazes are paired with Denby know-how and stoneware durability. From tapas plates and bowls to key accent pieces, this multi-functional range is an ideal match for any occasion.

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Casual dining



This bright and bold new collection from **Le Creuset** comes in nine signature colours: Cherry, Marseille, Flame, Soleil, Palm, Caribbean, Dune, Truffle, and White. Four versatile pieces are included in the collection and each piece is crafted from high-quality stoneware and finished in a vibrant, protective glaze that is resistant to staining. It's safe for broiler, oven, microwave and dishwasher use. Packaged in sets of four.



ORI has created a beautiful aesthetic that draws from the folded surfaces of origami. Each gleamingly polished surface on this new Oneida line of flatware suggests jeweled facets of reflective energy. This unique and textural sculpture defines creativity on the tabletop and a touch of panache to any table setting. The flatware is made of highly polished 18/10 stainless steel. It has a bright gleaming finish and is dishwasher-safe with a limited lifetime warranty. Available from **EveryWare Global**.

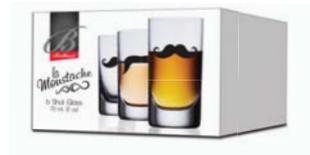


Abbott will unveil several new tableware designs at the August gift show in Toronto. The Marina collection, shown below, features a small fish-patterned cocktail plate, a large fish bone curve platter and a medium fish bone curve platter. Ideal for entertaining at the cottage, the collection is available in blue, green or white. Also new from Abbot is this line of durable enamel-look bowls, shown right. With a 5-inch diameter, the vintage styled bowls come in black, blue, coral, mint, grey, ivory, red, white and yellow.





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Casual dining

These classic bone china sets from **InterContinental Mercantile** are perfect for everything from informal meals to elegant entertaining. They complement any décor and feature classic, yet modern silhouettes with smooth round shapes and rimless edges. The new Brilliant/Luzerne collections offer a wide range of plat-

ing and serving options. Attractive New Bone China is safe for freezer, microwave, and dishwasher use and is even oven-safe to 392°F. Shown left is the Tokyo pattern and the Linen pattern in aqua is shown below. Each 16-piece set includes four mugs, four cereal bowls, four salad plates and four dinner plates.



Desserts are sweeter with this beautifully illustrated collection of porcelain plates, mugs and dessert stand from BIA Cordon Bleu, left. Distributed by **Danesco**, each piece is gift packaged in hat boxes. Also from BIA Cordon Bleu, the Woods collection features serving bowls and plates in crisp white porcelain with a wood grain design. The pieces add a touch of woody whimsy to the table. All pieces are sold separately.



'The Napkins' line is now available from **David Shaw Designs**. The original single-use premium fibre napkin that looks and feels like textile. Soft, absorbent and sturdy, the napkins are available in an array of colours, and a variety of patterns. Affordable luxury to enhance any entertaining experience, these deluxe napkins are designed in Switzerland and made in Italy. Sold in a gift box.



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What's new in spice grinders and pepper mills



These new Salt & Pepper Mills by **Le Creuset** are a beautiful combination of modern technology and classic form. They're available in 13 iconic colours – Soleil, Flame, Palm, White, Caribbean, Pink, Black, Nutmeg, Coastal Blue, Marseille, Cherry, Dune and Cassis. The ceramic grinder is strong enough to crack peppercorns and corrosion-resistant for grinding salt. Adjust the grind setting with a simple turn of the knob – clockwise for a finer ground and counterclockwise for a coarser grind. Each mill is eight inches tall.



Combining the strength of concrete with the beauty of olive wood, Bérard's Concrete Collection from **Browne** is a welcome addition to any kitchen. The intense graining and variations in characteristics of the olive wood lid are a stark contrast to the industrial white concrete base. Each piece is carefully handcrafted to meet a high standard of quality. The lid is coated to ensure it never loses its natural luster. The mills are built with high performance ceramic grinder for years of reliable use. These are not just kitchen accessories, they are works of art. They're available in two sizes – 3.75-inches or 4.75 inches.



Counseltron recently introduced a new *Dalls* pepper mill set by Vigar. To use, simply turn the upper half of the dolls to season food and the lower half to refill. Each mill can hold up to 70 ml of either salt or pepper.

The scissor-like action of the two razor-sharp blades in **Microplane's** new Herb Mill will flawlessly cut herbs into a fine mince without tearing or bruising. The dual-purpose mill includes a removable herb stripper with three different-sized holes to easily strip stemmed herbs such as rosemary and thyme. It's offered in vibrant green with a large translucent body.



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Spice mills



The **Cuisinart** rechargeable salt, pepper and spice mill is a great way to spice up any dish.

The new single mill design has two grinding containers, one on top and one on the bottom and allows users to grind sea salt, peppercorns and other spices at the touch of a button. Sea salt, peppercorns and dried spices can be stored in the attached compartments. Simply press the on/off button to operate. To grind from the other side, turn the unit over and continue grinding. The rechargeable stainless steel mill rests comfortably in the charging base, ensuring that the unit is fully charged and ready to grind, at any moment. It adjusts from fine to coarse grinds quickly and easily for perfect results every time.



Trudeau is debuting a new range of dual tone Professional mills in either bold red or a gorgeous aqua colour, shown left. Each mill has a subtle ombre colour effect that makes a stylish addition to any table. The mills are 12 inches high and made of German beechwood that is sourced from sustainable forests. The units feature a premium durable carbon steel mechanism for the finest grind.

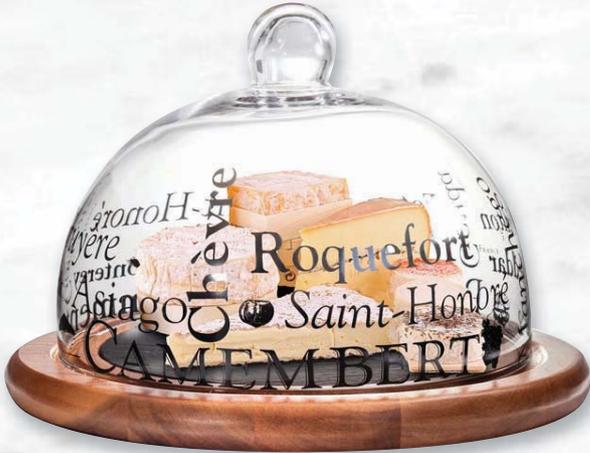


Crush Grind recently launched their own collection of mill and spice grinders and they're now available from **David Shaw Designs**. Each mill has a ceramic grinder that will not oxidize or alter the flavour of the food. The C Collection, left, features body shapes made of birch, oak and walnut hardwoods and a 25 year guarantee on ceramic parts. The Kala collection, below, got its inspiration from the botanical shapes, specifically the Kala flower. The stainless steel and glass body is easy to fill.





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Spice mills



This new assortment of Forest Mills by Cole & Mason feature a handsome, dark stained beechwood and acrylic design. The salt and pepper mills are both made from sustainably sourced wood with a contemporary contrast of light and dark. Available from **DanESCO**, Forest mills have a hardened carbon steel mechanism for pepper and diamond sharp ceramic mechanism for salt. They're sold separately or as a gift-boxed set with a lifetime guarantee.

The iconic Paris pepper mill from Peugeot is now available in a poppy red lacquer finish. It's available in four popular sizes from **Swissmar**. Also new is the Peugeot Pep's salt and pepper mill set, below. Offered in four colours, it provides two solutions in one unit: the bottom half is pepper and the top half is salt. It's ultra-practical and fun to use.



Cole & Mason adds a touch of gloss to the Oxford line of salt and pepper mills. The mills are now available in flaming red or midnight black, shown below. They feature a durable stainless steel mechanism on the pepper mill and ceramic grinder on the salt mill, each offering superior output. The units are sold separately.



Oldbury Glacier white mills from Cole & Mason have a lacquered high gloss white finish, above. Simply twist the stainless steel collar on the pepper mill to six pre-selected settings to achieve fine to coarse grinds. The salt mill features three pre-selected settings from fine to coarse. Each has a push top cap for easy refill.

The **Salton** herb and spice grinder has a stylish stainless steel design. It's equipped with stainless steel blades and a removable bowl that resists flavour transfer and is dishwasher-safe. One-handed operation pulse control perfectly grinds from coarse to extra fine.



"It's critical to attend this market to keep our position as leaders in good design."

— Edward Nader, Nader's Gallery, Shreveport, LA



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Toronto Gift Fair

August 9 to 12, 2015 • Toronto Congress Centre/International Centre

The Fall Toronto Gift Fair, a trade-only event, returns this August to the International Centre and Toronto Congress Centre (home of gourmet housewares). Filled with the best and newest gift ideas for the holidays, retailers will find a range of products from housewares to home décor, crafts, decorations and more to stock their shelves. New food and drink accessories will be showcased by several exhibitors this year, including Ace Annison, Inter-Continental Mercantile, Kitchen Innovations, Microplane, Scantrade International, Swissmar, Ventures International Products and WWRD Canada.

For the kitchen, Kitchen Innovations' new Zeal collection, Reflecting Nature, includes tools and accessories that will bring life and colour to any kitchen. Each item in the pastel collection reflects a particular flower or plant. Microplane will showcase its latest conical-shaped rotary grater and the Elite Box Grater.

Keeping a stocked and stylish home-bar is easy with new collections from WWRD and Swissmar. The WWRD Waterford Rebel Collection decanters come in plush, plum and amber, while its



martini, flute and cocktail glasses dazzle with purple and pink bands. With more than 20 new products, Swissmar's Nuance Wine and Bar Accessories collection includes small, carefully designed details, combined with functional Scandinavian design.

To keep guests' hands from freezing, while enjoying ice-cold drinks, Scantrade International introduces its new can cooler, the Artican. Once frozen, the cooling core twists on to keep 12-ounce drinks cold for up to three hours.

For warm drinks, several exhibitors feature interesting new products. Inter-Continental's Ekobrew, a universal single-cup brewer, comes with a reusable filter to make it an earth-friendly coffee system. The silicone tea infuser/tamper from Ventures International features a slim design to fit most cup styles and to

release tea's full flavour.

For entertaining, Ace Annison introduces two new 17-piece tea sets, including the Empress Collection bone china and the Golden Plum Flower fine bone china. And Royal Selangor will debut two beautiful new tableware collections from British fashion designer Ted Baker. (We look at several new products being launched by housewares exhibitors on the following pages.)

Organized and managed by CanGift, the semi-annual Toronto Gift Fair is the largest gift fair in Canada, with more than 1,800 exhibitors and more than 24,600 qualified retailers annually.

The January show runs five days but the summer show is only four days long. It runs from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday to Tuesday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the final day, Wednesday.

On Sunday evening, the association will honour the 2015 retailers of the year as well as supplier and sales rep of the year at a gala dinner at the Congress Centre. Contact Margo Warren at 416-642-1045 for more information.

For more details on the August show, visit www.cangift.org.

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TORONTO GIFT FAIR PRODUCT PREVIEW



The **All-Clad** Kitchen Scale was designed with a silicone ring around the base for sturdiness and a LCD screen for easy reading. It can be displayed on the counter, or to save space, it can be hung on a wall by simply sliding out the handy hook.



Zwilling J.A. Henckels will introduce four new knives under the Pro Series brand this fall as well as this charming new range of specialty cocottes from Staub. Available in three specialty designs, a pig, a tomato and a green vegetable (not shown), the cocottes go beautifully from oven to table. Also new for the show are three kitchen tools, a rice paddle, lasagna spatula and tongs (above). Each is made of 18/10 stainless steel with a seamless handle.



Made with heavy brushed stainless steel, All-Clad's Kitchen shears have finely honed edges and a micro-serrated upper blade to provide precision cutting. A bone notch makes cutting small poultry bones an easy task, while the shears pull apart for easy cleaning by hand or dishwasher.



Stop by the **Abbott** exhibit to see this Relic line of candle holders. Designed for indoor or outdoor use, the ivory terracotta candle holders come in three sizes.



A slender, minimalist design and improved ease of use are just two of the enhanced features on the new Murex S07 single serve coffee machine from **Caffitaly**. With automatic portioning of the drinks and a bigger capsule drawer, it lets users prepare perfect coffees and delicious hot drinks in one simple touch. It features a variable resistor sensor, 18-20 bar pump and a thermal fuse for added safety. The Murex also lets users regulate the height of the drip tray to accommodate different sized cups or mugs. This new machine is available in white and silver, black and silver, and red and silver (not shown).



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TORONTO GIFT FAIR PRODUCT PREVIEW

Award winning Brix Chocolate is now available in a beautiful new gift set from **Cuisivin**. The impressive set includes a solid cherry wood cutting board, matching knife and 3-ounce bars of the four Brix Chocolate flavours. It's specially designed to complement a variety of wines.



Counseltron is excited to launch a new line of Vitamines' Power by Metaltex. This fruity line of gadgets make daily tasks in the kitchen fun and easy. Offered in a range of trendy colours.



DanESCO will debut several innovative new microwave items from Joseph Joseph. The microwave omelette bowl, above, is an all-in-one preparation and cooking bowl. Simply crack the eggs into the bowl, tilt it backwards and whisk together. The bowl lays flat on its base for cooking. Below, the M-Cuisine rice and grain cooker prepares perfect, fluffy rice in the microwave. It in-



cludes a two-litre cooking pot and lid, colander, measuring cup and rice paddle that doubles as both a lock and carry handle. Also new from DanESCO is this classic oil and vinegar pourer from Cole & Mason. The sleek dispenser lets users pour and store oils, vinegars or soy sauce effortlessly. With a unique oil return system, countertop mess is reduced while an anti-clog filter easily traps all particles.



David Shaw Designs will show two new items from GEFU, the Violi handheld slicer, shown left, and the Lorenzo coffee grinder, right. The slicer has a compact 'V' design with finger guard and is adjustable to create vegetable slices from 1mm to 5 mm thick. The non-slip silicone feet provide added safety while a stainless steel hanging loop makes it easy to store. The coffee grinder has an adjustable ceramic mechanism that allows for 11 options for grinding beans. It can grind beans for up to four cups at a time. The crank handle detaches and hooks on the side for convenient storage. It's perfect for espresso, filter coffee or use with a French press.



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TORONTO GIFT FAIR PRODUCT PREVIEW



Microplane's versatile new Elite Box Grater, comprising five different blade styles within a classic four-sided design, will make its debut at the Toronto Gift Fair. This space saving grater features five stainless steel blades: fine, coarse, ultra coarse, ribbon and large shaver. It has a contemporary ergonomic design. Also new for the show is this compact, modern garlic cutter, right. Offered in two colours, it transforms peeled cloves into delicate strands in seconds, all with minimal hand contact, effort or mess.



The Strauss Gourmet pasta maker from Orly Cuisine is 15 cm wide. It's available in stainless steel with elegant black accents and can make homemade delicious pasta effortlessly. It can also be used with attachments to make lasagna, capellini, linguini or ravioli.



This new Ekobrew single serve coffee machine from InterContinental Mercantile is designed to help your customers save money while helping to save the earth. This integrated coffee system allows brewing of all K-Cup packs – both 1.0 and 2.0 versions – while the eco-friendly, reusable filter encourages consumers to use their own coffee. Add-on products such as paper filters and cleaning tablets provides consumers with even further options for a quality coffee brewing experience. The machine comes with a bonus reusable filter.



Cool Touch silicone oven mitts by Orly now come in new colours and patterns. The fashionable mitts come in trendy pink and yellow with a checkered design. Made of premium, heat resistant quality silicone.



Fun and machismo, la Moustache beer glasses are perfect for that masculine drinking experience. Made of clear durable glass with two moustache designs, the glasses are sold gift boxed in sets of two by InterContinental.



The Strauss Elite non-stick grater set from Orly Cuisine includes both medium and coarse blades. The set doubles as a practical plastic container with lid or a food holder.



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TORONTO GIFT FAIR PRODUCT PREVIEW



There will be plenty of excitement at the **Swissmar** booth this August. Shown above, the new 8-person Ticino raclette party grill is great for cooking breakfast, lunch and/or dinner. This new model features a granite stone top for naturally even heat distribution. The set includes: eight raclette dishes with non-stick coating, eight wooden spatulas, variable temperature control dial with indicator light, user manual and recipes. A new pizza slicer from Zyliss, left, features an innovative crust cutter for hard-to-reach corners. The ergonomic handle is designed for comfort and a snap-on blade cover allows for safe storage. Several new items by Nuance will also be featured, including this sleek rolling pin. The philosophy behind Nuance is to combine elegant and aesthetic design with functional, practical items.



The Mixed Metal Double Jigger Set from **Product Specialties** includes three different finishes: copper, brass and stainless steel. It features a two-sided flip-over design for different measurements, with markings in both metric and imperial.



Zingo bottles from Zing Anything give water a tasty zing by infusing it with fresh citrus fruits. The 22-ounce compact, light-weight water bottles are leak-proof and available in an array of fun colours. Visit the **Don Schacter + Assoc.** exhibit.



Designed in New Zealand, **Click Clack** products from Innova are renowned for user-friendliness and durability. The line, above, feature an airtight seal and easy to open/easy to close single action operation. Each piece has a clear base and a top in either plastic or stainless steel. Visit **Don Schacter + Assoc.**

PackIt – also from Don Schacter – offers a simple way to keep food and drinks cool anywhere. Simply store the bag in the freezer overnight and the freezable gel liner will generate waves of cold to keep food chilled for 10 hours. It folds up for compact storage.



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NY NOW - The Market for Home & Lifestyle

August 15 to 19, 2015 • Jacob Javits Convention Center, NYC

A full slate of educational sessions supplemented by unique after-hours networking opportunities, themed product displays and awards for product excellence will enrich the market experience for participants in the summer 2015 edition of NY NOW at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center.

Leading industry experts will dissect practically every aspect of business operations – social media marketing, visual merchandising, tax preparation, demographic analysis, importing advice – and share savvy, actionable strategies. After-hours events include NY NOW's popular "Night on Broadway," featuring specially priced tickets to innovative new musical *HAMILTON*. A full seminar and event schedule is available online at www.nynow.com/programs, with advance pricing discounts in effect through August 14.

SnapRetail will host a variety of daily, free, sessions addressing online marketing strategies with both 15-minute "In a Snap" sessions, as well as more in-depth explorations of building a web presence, Pinterest and Instagram for businesses, effective email subject lines, and more.

On Sunday, August 16, the seminar "Open House – What's Hot in Home?" will be presented by Warren Shoulberg of Progressive Business Media, Laurie Pressman of Pantone and Tom Mirabile of Lifetime Brands. The seminar, which will address design and colour trends, as well as related consumer preferences.

Other Sunday sessions include "Pop-Up Retailing" hosted by Specialty Retail Report and presented by Patti Biro, will address the new trend in temporary retailing. E-commerce will come under the microscope in a panel discussion,

"Turning Brick-and-Mortar to Click-and-Order" led by Jenny Heinzen York of *Home Accents Today*.

Material and colour trends, brand story-telling, spa retailing and selling to Millennials will be the topics addressed in three seminars on Monday, August 17.

On tap for Tuesday, August 18, Fashion Group International will deliver "New Gifting Experience," discussing the latest in gifting for today's discriminating consumer; "Blogging for Business 101: Everything You Need to Know and Why" will discuss using a blog to build business; and Gift Shop will present "How to Hire, Manage and Retain Millennial Employees."

Attendees also will be able to take advantage of an expanded slate of seminars to be hosted in collection with Artisan Resource, which runs concurrently with NY NOW at the Javits Center.

The 15-minute, and 45-minute online marketing presentations hosted by SnapRetail, as well as the Artisan Resource seminars, are free of charge. Most other NY NOW sessions cost \$20 before August 14, and \$25 afterwards. Pre-registration is required for all sessions.

On the social side, in addition to the Broadway Show, NY NOW will host the *Gifts and Decorative Accessories' Retailer Excellence Awards* on Sunday, August 16. They also offer discounted admission to the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) during Market Week; and a networking reception for Museum Store Association members.

Two special product displays will highlight sustainability and design trends at NY NOW. The *SustainAbility: design for a better world* display will fea-

ture eco-friendly and socially-responsible home and lifestyle products and producers while "Open House," sponsored by Progressive Business Media and Pantone, will highlight four key design and color trends for 2015-2016.

Outstanding product design and innovation will be recognized in four Best New Product Awards categories: Baby + Child, Gourmet Housewares + Tabletop, Home Textiles and Personal Care + Wellness, with popular voting to determine an overall "Best of HOME" and "Best of LIFESTYLE" winner from among these categories. Popular voting also will determine "Eco Choice Awards" winners in three categories – Most Sellable, Most Innovative and Most Sensitive Use of Materials.

Industry experts will cull winners in four additional awards categories: The Accent on Design Awards and the Accent on Design "Bloggers' Choice Awards" will recognize excellence in contemporary home and lifestyle product design; the ASID NY Metro Chapter's "Best of the Best" Awards will select HOME exhibitors for product excellence in seven categories; and IFDA NY Selects – Best in Market NY NOW will select new and innovative home products in eight categories.

NY NOW's three comprehensive collections – HOME, LIFESTYLE and HANDMADE, as well as NEW! exhibitors – encompass 100,000 products in myriad product categories. A full seminar and event schedule is available online at www.nynow.com/programs, with advance pricing discounts in effect through August 14. Information and registration is available online at www.nynow.com.

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NY NOW PRODUCT PREVIEW

This **Acacia** bowl will add a touch of safari to any home. Hand-carved and painted in Kenya from jacaranda wood, each bowl measures 4.5 inches and is available in giraffe, elephant or zebra designs with 10% of sales going to animal conservation.

Visit Booth 419



Badash debuts a brand new collection at NY Now this August. The Robert M. Weiss reverse painting collection includes 16 distinctive products. Coaster sets are offered with painted or mirrored finishes while sets of storage boxes have hinged tops and felt linings. The napkin box is shown below.

Visit Booth 3040



This unique Slide serving tray from Finell features an angled, solid wood tray with a sliding quartz top that changes position easily. Designed for entertaining, the tray is also removable to allow a variety of different serving options.

Visit Booth 3902



Drift is a bold new design for **Chilewich's** molded series of placemats, above. It was inspired by a Japanese two-colour print and presents a striking graphic. They're suitable for indoor and outdoor use. Color Tempo, below, is Chilewich's star in the new Fall/Winter 2015 Collection. This unique design embodies five tonal colour stories: dark brown, light tan, grey, blue and red/orange.

Visit Booth 3704



Charles Viancin will introduce a chef's towel, potholders and a poppy apron, right. There is a built-in silicone potholder on the apron that provides easy access to heat protection anywhere in the kitchen as well as an over-sized ergonomic pocket to keep kitchen essentials handy. Both items are machine washable.

Visit Booth 3062



The **For Life** Lucidity 12-ounce Flask Drip-in-Mug, complete with a borosilicate glass mug and stainless steel dripper. It's ideal for dripping a fresh cup of coffee anywhere, anytime. No paper filter is needed. The dripper features extra-fine holes to let the natural oils from coffee come through for a bolder, better flavor. This manual brewing method allows users to maintain complete control of their brewing style. The mug set is available in five trendy colours in a gift box.

Visit Booth 3546



Harry Barker will present a range of colourful pet toys and treat tins. The 12-ounce paper-cut treat tins, above, hold natural, wholesome treats baked in the U.S. The bone toys, below, feature an eco-fiber fill and two way squeakers.

Visit Booth 7412



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NY NOW PRODUCT PREVIEW



Rice melamine bowls and cups are now available in a variety of new prints and two-tone solid designs. The company will also show a range of ceramic vases, candle holders, cake stands and tin kitchen jars.
Visit Booth 3672



This lovely little tea cup features a mouse riding a tricycle illustrated by **Kata Golda**. Perfect for tiny hands, these food-safe stoneware cups have a soft-white glaze and are hand-thrown. Each holds about eight ounces and is safe the dishwasher and the microwave.
Visit Booth 9407



Natural OliveWood will debut a sturdy cooking spoon with pointed edge, left, and a rustic, three-section basket, below, featuring a trio of hollow bowls cut into a rustic log.
Visit Booth 3572

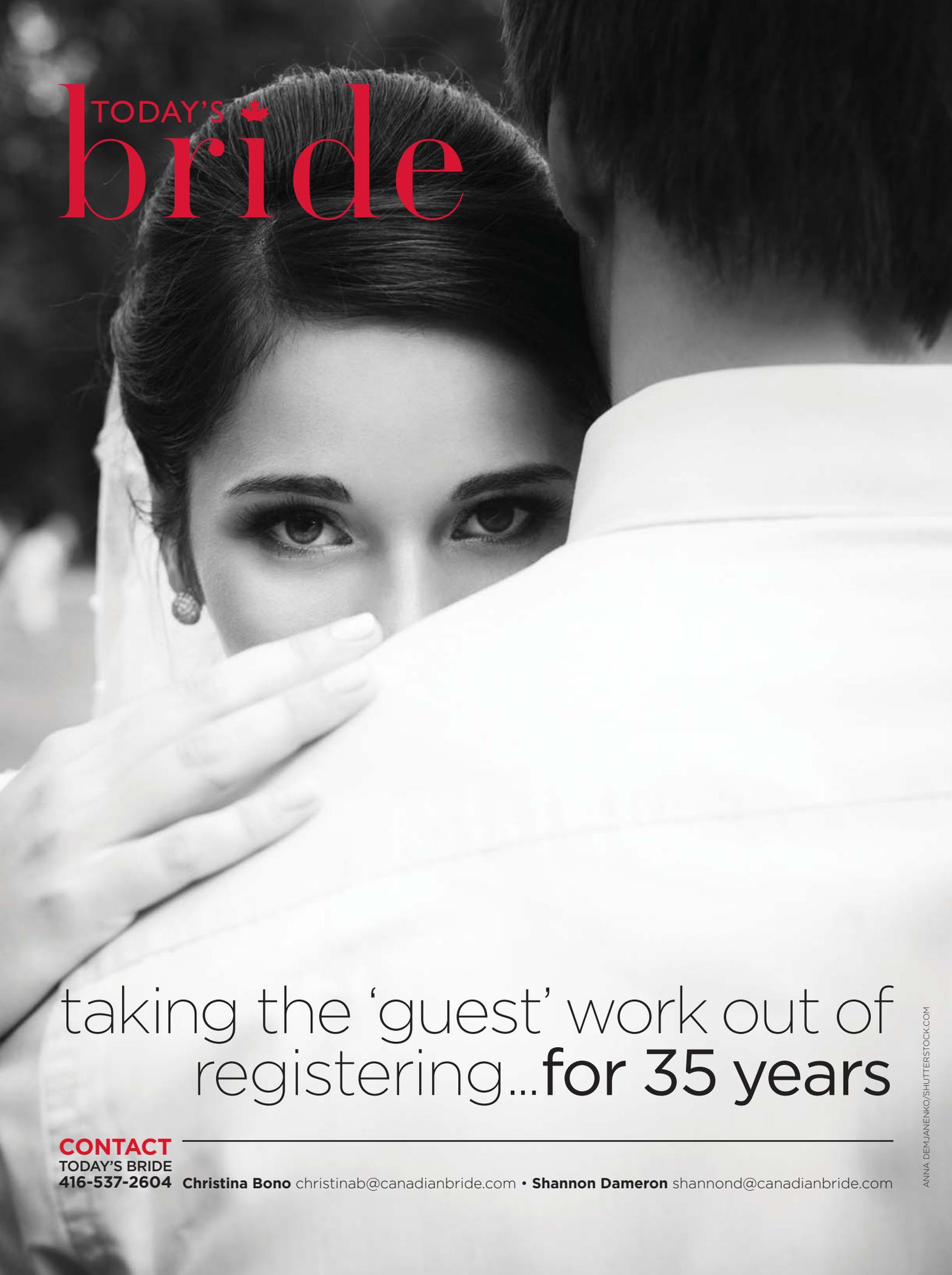


The beachy Montauk collection of barware from **Pigeon & Poodle** evokes a weekend at the shore without ever having to leave the house. The leather-trimmed striped canvas makes for a casual cocktail set that includes leather tray, ice bucket, cocktail shaker and set of six coasters.
Visit Booth 2338



Peg and Awl will showcase this handsome apothecary cabinet. It makes an ideal storage cabinet for all washroom needs. Simple and versatile, the cabinet is made of reclaimed antique cypress, which produces its own preservative oil. **Visit Booth 9301**





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NY NOW PRODUCT PREVIEW

The **Zoku** iced coffeemaker turns piping hot coffee into a chilled beverage. The durable, 11-ounce coffeemaker works with any brewer to serve up single portions. It includes a removable stainless steel mug, outer insulating sleeve, spill-resistant lid and colour-coordinated straw.

Visit Booth 3508



These caviar napkins from **Walter G.** are the perfect playful complement to any seaside feast. The hand-drawn sardine design are hand block printed by artisans in India.

Visit Booth 2472



The No-Slip Easy Grip Cup from **Marusya** can be held by a single hand with two fingers applying gentle pressure. It's designed for easy pick-up and slip-free control to provide stability to drinks in unstable hands. The cup is made of resilient BPA-free polypropylene that is crush-proof and crack-proof.

Visit Booth 4000



The mango wood collection from **Be Home** is collected from trees on plantations that stop producing wood naturally after 15-30 years. When cut down a new young tree is immediately planted in its place, making it a fully sustainable resource. Shown below is the small mango salad bowl with bark exterior.

Visit Booth 3662



JOCO cups are made from high quality borosilicate glass, making them lightweight and resistant to extreme hot and cold temperatures. They won't crack or chip and are also microwave and dishwasher-safe. Each JOCO cup is wrapped in a silicone sleeve and sealed with an ergonomic, splash proof silicone lid. The cups are packaged in a 100% recyclable paper canister and available in three sizes and in an array of 15 bright, vintage-colours.

Visit Booth 3667



Two stylish dinnerware lines will be featured at the **Twig New York** exhibit. Shown above left, the 'Cutlery' collection now features mugs with a 24K gold handles (also available in white) and a pasta bowl. The Heritage Blue Bird Collection, above right, is made of hand-decorated fine bone china and packaged individually. It was created by ceramist Molly Hatch.

Visit Booth 3245

NY NOW PRODUCT PREVIEW

These Crow napkins from **Counter Culture** are hemmed on all four sides and printed with black, eco-friendly inks. The 18-inch square napkin is made of 100% cotton and can go into the washing machine and dryer.

Visit Booth 9118



Shown left, **Stonewall Kitchen** will introduce two tasty barbecue sauces: Boozy Bacon and Honey Sriracha. The bacon sauce is thick, rich and zesty with bits of real bacon, onion, spices and a dash of bourbon. It's perfect for beef kabobs or a rack of ribs. The robust honey barbecue sauce can be used as a glaze for meats and poultry or can be added to homemade baked beans for a delicious kick of sweetness.

Visit Booth 3580

Shown below, **Kevin O'Brien's** Moroccan metallic velvet pillow makes a statement in any room. Inspired by Moroccan tile designs, it offers a bold yet delicate splash of colour with a metallic pigment print on lustrous velvet. It comes with a zip closure and a feather/down insert. A pillow in a leopard metallic print is also available.

Visit Booth 2444



Leather Airplant Holders from **Jay Teske** are made from five to six-ounce vegetable-tanned natural leather, sourced and tanned in the U.S. Each holder comes with an airplant selected from an assorted variety and includes care instructions. The legs are flexible and can be shaped according to desire. The natural leather will patina with use. A new set of four leather coasters in natural or brown tones will also be introduced.

Visit Booth 9445

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Brenda Poffenroth

Sales Agent for Browne & Co. and Port-Style Enterprises



When you're selling to retailers, it sure helps if you've had first hand experience. As a former store owner, Alberta sales agent Brenda Poffenroth has all that, and much more. Representing Rogers Chocolates as well as Browne and Port-Style, Brenda has developed the sort of close relationships with her customers that are rare in any industry. She considers them 'family' and treats them as such.

Born in Pincher Creek, Alberta in 1962, Brenda was the older of two daughters. Her father was an RCMP officer and by the time she was 18, the family had moved a half dozen times to small towns across the province. But rather than fret over the moves, Brenda actually enjoyed each town. An outgoing 'people person' in a very close-knit family, she made friends wherever they settled, many of whom stay in touch to this day.

After graduating from high school, she started working for AGT, setting up retail phone centres. She loved the job, and the pay was terrific, but after having kids she decided to take time off. Married to her long-time sweetheart, Russ, the couple have two sons. Brenda's oldest son, Dayne, was born in 1984 and in 1988, she had her second son, Scott, who was born profoundly deaf.

In 1989, the family settled in Cochrane, where Russ had a good job with his family's firm in the oil and gas industry. It gave Brenda the chance to take classes in sign language and learn how to care for handicapped children. Compassionate by nature, she spent a lot of time working with children. When Scott started kindergarten, his school hired Brenda to work with special needs students. When Scott moved to Calgary to attend a secondary school for the deaf, Brenda got a job at a private school nearby, where she stayed until she was almost 40.

By then, it was time to consider new possibilities. She had become close to the mother of Dayne's best friend, Valerie Vassie, and the two decided to become business partners. In 2001, they purchased an 1,800-square-foot bed and bath store called The Heavenly Outhouse. It was located on the

main street of Cochrane, not far from The Kitchen Boutique, a shop owned by Claire Breeze.

Val and Brenda quickly set to expanding the product offerings and reorganizing the store to appeal to a wider market. Though she admits she may have been a bit naive about retail, Brenda was not the least bit nervous about the venture. "It was a lot of work, we were always exhausted, but I loved the staff and the customers," she says.

The partners complemented each other. Valerie was strong on the administrative and accounting side while Brenda enjoyed the merchandising and product displays, as well as dealing with customers.

Five years of working seven-day weeks took its toll, however. The customers' attitudes were changing, the workload was constant and, because they were located in a 100-year-old building, the upkeep was expensive. So in 2006, when Val's husband was ready to retire, they decided to sell the store.

At about the same time, their rep from Port-Style was leaving and suggested Brenda take over the line. She was able to work part-time in the store while going out on the road calling on other retailers. In June of 2006, the store was sold and Brenda embarked on a full time sales career, covering Alberta and the Northwest Territories. In addition to Port-Style, she represented Bella-Flor and Rogers' Chocolates, and within a few months, Browne also became a client.

A natural for selling, Brenda has a distinct advantage in that she has worked in the retail trenches herself. More importantly, as she points out, she really *likes* her customers as people and has a great deal of empathy. "I understand when they have a hard day. I want to help them find solutions, but sometimes they just need someone to listen, especially with all the challenges we face in Alberta today."

Claire Breeze, a former competitor who is now a customer, has glowing praise for Brenda.

"As a former retailer, she gets 'it'. Brenda knows when to tell you about new and exciting products, but doesn't come across as a

pushy sales person. She's always willing to do demonstrations for events, or meet at unusual times and will cater her schedule to the our needs. She's passionate about cooking and always has a recipe and/or story that goes with it, which she tells with a smile or a laugh. She's a wonderful person, a well-organized rep and a true treasure in the kitchen sector", Claire explains.

Trevor Kidd at Browne has been similarly impressed with Brenda as a sale rep. "We're lucky to have her," he says. "She cares about customers, and not just in the normal sense. She genuinely treats them like family, and relates to them on many levels. Brenda exemplifies the partnership aspect that we believe in at Browne."

It certainly helps that Brenda learned from one of the best in the housewares industry, Margaret Alsamgeest, who retired from Browne last year.

"Margaret was a wealth of knowledge about the products and about our industry," says Brenda. "She was such a kind and gracious lady, she would do anything for anybody. I hope to be just like her some day."

Though many of her customers are struggling these days, Brenda is still optimistic about the future and happy in her job. She knows there are still a lot of good store owners who will stick out the tough times and keep looking for that next great product.

At home, Brenda is equally fulfilled by her growing but still close-knit family. Both her boys are married now and she and Russ have four adorable grandchildren, three girls and a boy. Brenda's new grandson was named Corson – her maiden name – to honour her father, now retired from the RCMP. As always, family comes first for the Poffenroths, both at home and in business. ☺



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