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Canada's Housewares Magazine

September 2016

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## Opening Lines

### As luck would have it

This summer I had a chance to read several good books but the one I enjoyed the most was *Shoe Dog – A memoir by the creator of Nike*. Written by Nike founder Phil Knight, it is an inspirational story of a man who overcame tremendous obstacles to make it to the top of what has become a very competitive industry.

The most impressive part of the story was that Knight actually created the market he ultimately dominated. He was a visionary who saw potential where others didn't – athletic shoes for people who weren't athletes. It was a novel idea at the time, but he changed the way consumers think – and dress – with fierce determination, a passion for the product and a willingness to take incredible financial risks because he knew he had a winner. The best part was that Knight – a shy and introverted accountant – had to step far out of his comfort zone to get his product on store shelves and chase his dream. Exhibiting at trade shows, being approached by loud, extroverted sales people was a nightmare for him but he persevered.

I finished the book just before the Toronto Gift Fair and, as we were setting up the *Home Style Showcase* at the Congress Centre, I was struck by the many similarities between Phil Knight and the pioneers in our own little industry. CEOs who normally wore suits in the office were in tee shirts and work boots, putting together exhibits and opening boxes of products. They put all their faith in those new products and don't mind getting their hands dirty with their entire team. And like Phil Knight, I know many company owners who, in the early years, only paid themselves after everyone else was paid – if there was anything left.

In my three decades in housewares, I have been privileged to know many innovators, people who created a brand new category and reshaped our market. Edward Weil comes to mind, bringing back a 'Cuisinart' machine from Europe in the 1970s, long before Canadians had ever heard of a food processor. Or Moss Kadey, discovering the Brita filter in Germany, and launching a hydration revolution right across North America. He was one of the smartest men I've ever met and became one of the wealthiest. Robert Trudeau is another (his daughter is profiled in this issue). He turned his grandfather's small tobacco shop in Montreal into a global market leader in the housewares industry.

Of course, Nike didn't really take off until Phil Knight was able to secure endorsements from professional athletes willing to display the now famous 'swoosh'. Michael Jordan's Air Jordans were a true game changer and we all know what brand Tiger Woods was wearing when he won the Masters.

It has been the same with celebrity chefs and the Food Network. A good chef's product endorsements can be very valuable and their cache has become an essential part of kitchenware marketing. (Or, as in the case of Paula Deen, a liability.)

Now a billionaire with a best seller, Phil Knight believes that his success can be attributed to three things: talent, hard work and luck. The most important was luck, he feels, because a lot of talented people work hard but don't achieve what he did. As someone who has been blessed with extraordinary luck all of my life, that really struck a chord. But as you read Knight's story, you realize that in many instances, he created his own luck. Most entrepreneurs do, simply by recognizing and acting upon opportunities when they present themselves. They are prone to seek out new experiences and are willing to take calculated risks when others won't. Lucky people are also overwhelmingly positive and don't let failure deter them.

I have met a great many very lucky people during my career in housewares. We are all lucky to be working, and thriving, in such a vibrant industry. But then again, as my son likes to say, the harder you work, the luckier you get.



– Laurie O'Halloran  
laurie@homestylemag.ca

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• **Kami Bosland** has been appointed Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Cuisinart Canada. He replaces Rick Simpson, who left in June.

• International Innovation Company has named **Stephanie Christiansen** Vice President of North American sales, a newly created position for the company. In related news, after 30 years of being the face of Vacu Vin and the International Innovation, **Bernd Schneider** has officially transferred ownership of the family business to the next generation, his son, **Patrick Schneider**, President and CEO of the company.

• In early July, Canadian Tire abruptly reinstated former chief executive **Stephen Wetmore** to the CEO role, replacing Michael Medline.

• **Amanda Georgakis**, formerly with

Groupe SEB, is the new account manager for Le Creuset, based in Toronto.

• **Jim Kemp** (JK Sales and Marketing) has announced a partnership between Kelly Craig and Ventures International to launch a new *Smokin' BBQ* line of gourmet organic smoking accessories.

• Former Arc International CEO **Jean-Rene Gougelet** is the new CEO of Casabella, succeeding **Bruce Kaminstein**, who is now executive chairman.

• The Legacy Companies has acquired Legion Industries, a cookware and appliance manufacturer, the third acquisition the company has completed this year.

• **Bonnie Brooks** will retire from HBC on December 31st. From 2008 to 2012, Brooks was the first female CEO and president of Hudson's Bay.

I just finished a complete review of the July 2016 edition of *Home Style Magazine*. Without question, it's the finest edition I've read in a long time. It brought back so many memories of my 33 years spent in the housewares business. It also brought a few tears.

The product coverage and the feature articles were all very good. I particularly liked the profile of Canadian Tires' **Stephan Lafreniere**.

*Jim Johnson, retired,  
(formerly the housewares buyer for the Hudson's Bay Co.)*

We just wanted to drop you a quick note about your Editor's Message in the last issue. Both my mother, Donna, and I really enjoyed what you had to say, and thank you for saying publicly what many of us have been thinking during the last few gift shows.

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### Former Gourmet Show manager Susan Corwin dies at 76



Susan Corwin Miller, former manager of the GLM-owned Gourmet Housewares Show, died following a short battle with cancer. She was 76.

As Gourmet Housewares Show manager from 1987 until 2008, Corwin Miller was responsible for management, marketing and operations for the annual event. She oversaw the show's relocation from its home in San Francisco to interim venues in New Orleans, Las Vegas and Los Angeles.

An avid cook and wine connoisseur, Susan worked hard to ensure the show's positioning as a platform dedicated to meeting the needs of the independent specialty retailers, according to former colleagues.

Former GLM principal George F. (Jeff) Little says "Susan always embraced the mantra that staying close to the customer is the secret to business success. Susan was known and respected by virtually everyone in the gourmet products industry."

Dorothy Belshaw, president of gift and home décor for International Market Centers and former senior V.P. at GLM, adds: "Susan taught me that managing a trade show is more than drayage, floor plans and booth signs. It's about immersion in and passion for the industry you serve. Susan had both. She ate farm to table, entertained in her kitchen and drank Paso Robles Pinot before they were in vogue. She taught me how to julienne a carrot, make a pate choux, bone a chicken and open a bottle of wine in three seconds flat. She lived a life rich with friends, family, humor and plenty of good food. It just was too short."

Following her retirement from GLM in 2008, the Michigan native moved to Reno, Nevada, to be closer to family. At the time of her death, she was working as a real estate broker for Reno's Trans-Action Realty.

She is survived by her husband, Don Miller; daughter Jenna Moscoso; son David Corwin; son-in-law Arturo Moscoso; and daughter-in-law Kenyatta Player-Corwin.

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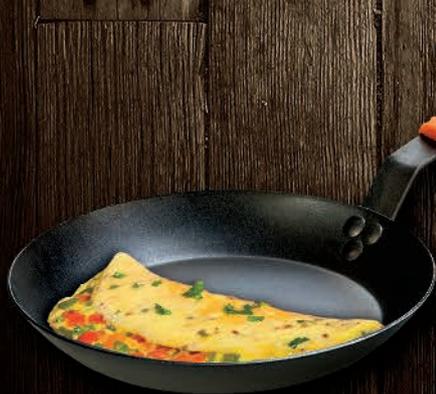
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### Shoppers adds more fresh food items

Canada's largest drugstore chain is beefing up its offerings in the grocery wars by adding fresh food to many of its stores. Shoppers Drug Mart, which is owned by Loblaw, is going after a growing segment of the grocery market — time-starved customers desiring only a few items and an effortless experience.

At the newly remodelled Toronto Shoppers colourful produce lines the shelves near the cosmetics department — everything from apples, bananas and plums to corn and cucumbers.

The brightly lit refrigerated section displays fresh fish and meat selections like sausages and pork loins. Prepared foods range from sandwiches to sushi and dumplings. Artisan-style French bread is displayed next to the cashier to tempt customers waiting in line.

The fresh additions began as a pilot project in a handful of Shoppers stores

in 2014. The company recently remodelled several stores in downtown Toronto and now boasts 29 locations serving perishable goods — 19 in Toronto, eight in Regina and two in Hamilton.

Shoppers operates more than 1,300 drug stores across Canada.

Shoppers says it is "pleased with the results to date. The company plans to remodel more stores and open 10 new Toronto locations this year that will include fresh food.

### Canadian home centres enjoy growth

Industry growth that has exceeded forecasts signals good news for the retail home improvement industry, despite a litany of factors that continue to challenge the sector.

Details of the industry's size and growth are found in this year's *Hard-*

*lines Retail Report*. Preliminary results indicate that retail home improvement sales were up by just 2% in 2015. With a strong start to this year with growth in sales, 2016 is likewise forecast to grow at or around 2%.

Despite the modest gains, the growth indicates good news for the retail home improvement industry. While spending on new construction was up for the first quarter, new housing starts are forecast to fall this year and next, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The collapse of the energy sector, exacerbated by the fire that swept through Fort McMurray, has had a drastic effect on dealers in Alberta.

Despite these setbacks, hardware and home improvement dealers continue to grow their business and this retail sector. "Factors such as new products, innovative store designs and a core focus on customer service have ensured their growth," says Michael McLarney, editor of *Hardlines*.

The *Retail Report* examines several aspects of the industry and its growth, including the trends affecting hardware and home improvement dealers in this country. For example, today's young homeowners are not as handy as previous generations. That puts the focus on do-it-for-me (DIFM) service, with everything from easy-to-assemble products to home delivery and installed sales. "The Retail Report underscores the importance of the in-store experience and the value of customer service," McLarney adds. "Home improvement retailing will transform more and more into a service-based industry in coming years."

The proprietary research in the Retail Report highlights some other significant trends, including consolidation occurring among retailers. In fact, just four retailers — Home Depot Canada, Lowe's Canada, Home Hardware Stores and Canadian Tire Retail — account for well over half of all retail hardware and home improvement sales in the country. The 2016-2017 *Hardlines Retail Report* is now available from HARDLINES.

For information, contact: Michael McLarney at [mike@hardlines.ca](mailto:mike@hardlines.ca).



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## Let the spoons do the shopping

Ikea Canada has completed a trial of a system that enables shoppers to purchase merchandise with the tap of a spoon, thanks to radio frequency identification technology. Deployed in a pop-up store in late May 2016, it freed shoppers from having to push carts or carry baskets around the store. Instead, they simply carried a wooden spoon with a built-in RFID tag, and made their purchases by tapping the spoon against shelf readers.

The temporary store's marketing goal was to take the routine out of food and housewares shopping, and to encourage consumers to think beyond their usual products and buying habits.

The store, which focused on two of Ikea's product lines (food and tableware), broke the conventional rules about how food is prepared and served, by offering unique growing, preparing and serving ideas for fresh food, along with products that included jams, seeds, pottery, glasses and other kitchenware.

At the store's entrance, shoppers are invited to take an RFID-tagged wooden spoon and use it to add desired products to a virtual shopping cart.

Each room within the pop-up store was designed to challenge consumers to re-think food conventions, break from traditions and try new things.

During the two week test period in late May, buyers used a passive, low-frequency (LF) RFID-enabled wooden spoon to create a virtual shopping cart. Instead of taking products off a shelf and carrying them to the checkout counter, customers could simply collect a digital shopping list of all items they wanted to buy, and then make that purchase, all with the wooden spoon.

## Macy's forced to close 100 stores

With Macy's sales and earnings continuing to decline over the last few quarters, the retailer has announced it will close 100 stores and boost e-commerce and other omnichannel and strategic initia-

tives to reinforce its performance.

Most of the approximately 100 full-line Macy's locations will shutter in early 2017. The company said the locations of the 100 stores will be announced at a later date.

For the second quarter, Macy's posted company net earnings of \$11 million, or three cents per diluted share, versus \$217 million, or 64 cents per diluted share, in the year-prior period.

Comparable sales on an owned plus licensed basis declined 2% in the quarter versus the year-previous period, Macy's reported. On an owned basis, second quarter comps slid 2.6%.

Net sales were \$5.87 billion versus \$6.1 billion in the year-earlier period. The closing of 41 stores was a factor in sales declines, Macy's asserts. Operating income was \$117 million as compared with \$436 million in last year's second quarter.

## HTI announces new website launch

HTI Buying Group has announced the launch of its new website. According to the group's blog, there are several new changes for vendors and retailers that were designed to help enhance the user experience.

HTI explained that retailers can now expect three places to download the group's vendor list, an enhanced vendor page, a trade show information page, current promotion page and more resources.

Consumers are spending more on services and experiences than products, and they are increasingly choosing to purchase online instead of in-store. Department store sales dropped approximately 4% in the first half of 2016, while digital sales at sites such as Jet.com or Amazon.com increased 10.6% in the same period.

As for the buying group's vendors, they will be able to access the retailer list with increased ease, according to the group. Additional upgrades will include trade show pages and a vendor page which shows what information a retailer will see about the company.

## Home furnishings are now bought online

Some 18% of home furniture and goods sales totaling \$18.67 billion happened online last year, up from 15.8% in 2014, according to a new report. The 101 largest retailers command 61.3% of the market, led by Wayfair with \$2.04 billion in sales in 2015.

## Shifting grocery sales

Traditional supermarkets have seen their share of the grocery market fall by more than six percentage points to 54.5% since 2007, while warehouse clubs and supercentres saw their combined share grow to 31.3% from 25.1%, according to a new report from *Progressive Grocer*.

"Supermarkets are in direct competition with every retail channel, including restaurants and subscription services like Blue Apron," says editor Meg Major.

## Amazon makes cooking easy

Amazon has launched a device in the UK that allows customers to order food and groceries from their kitchen simply by calling out ingredients or scanning a bar code.

The *Amazon Dash* is a small handheld stick that is designed to make it easier for customers to order everything they'd normally get from their supermarket via AmazonFresh, the company's online food delivery service.

A built-in microphone and an LED scanner allow the Dash to recognize what the customer wants and adds that item to their shopping basket. However, completing the order must be done by logging onto Amazon's website.

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## Theft more likely at self-serve checkout

Self-service checkout technology may offer convenience and speed, but it also helps turn law-abiding shoppers into petty thieves by giving them “ready-made excuses” to take merchandise without paying, two criminologists say.

In a study of retailers in the United States, Britain and other European countries, Adrian Beck and Matt Hopkins of the University of Leicester in England said the use of self-service lanes and smartphone apps to make purchases generated a loss rate of nearly 4%, more than double the average.

Given that the profit margin among European grocers is 3%, the technology is practically a nonprofit venture, according to the study, which was released this summer.

The scanning technology, which grew in popularity about 10 years ago, relies

largely on the honor system. Instead of having a cashier ring up and bag a purchase, the shopper is solely responsible for completing the transaction. That absence of human intervention, however, reduces the perception of risk and could make shoplifting more common.

Studies have been inconclusive about whether the systems actually promote more pilfering, but researchers believe they are a gateway for shoppers to act in ways they ordinarily would not.

Celebrities including Ina Garten, Chrissy Teigen and Ayesha Curry have collaborated with Williams-Sonoma to design a line of limited-edition spatulas to support *No Kid Hungry*. Williams-Sonoma will donate 30% of each purchase to the organization.



## New Lodge launch

Counseltron is launching a new 8-inch Carbon Steel Pan by Lodge. From commercial broilers to high BTU ranges, this pan can take the heat in any kitchen. When brought to the table, this distinctive pan makes any meal a more memorable experience. It is equipped with heavy gauge carbon steel and is pre-seasoned with an easy release finish that improves with use. It also has double loop handles and it is made in USA.

## Architec buys Madeira

Architec Housewares has acquired Madeira Housewares, manufacturer of Brazilian teak cutting boards, and the Starboard Collection, a Vermont-based manufacturer of dining and serving products. The acquisitions are part of a strategic plan to expand the scope of the kitchenware company and establish a national sales team.

The merger includes Madeira's line of Mario Batali-licensed cutting boards. With the Starboard Collection, Architec plans to expand the line of acrylic glassware and dining and serving pieces.

The Architec line is distributed in Canada by Jascor Housewares.

## CanGift helps Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity Canada and the Canadian Gift Association (CanGift) have announced a new partnership that not only helps families and communities but is also environmentally conscious. Any remaining products from exhibitors who take part in CanGift trade shows will be donated to Habitat for Humanity Canada ReStores for sale.

Anita Schachter, President of CanGift, says “the Association is thrilled to be working with a company that brings meaningful change to people’s lives.”

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The new logo and packaging design were introduced at the Toronto Gift Fair by, left to right: Allison Mansueto, Kevin Wellendorf and Pierfrancesca Sanna of Bormioli Rocco and Jacques Dubuc and France Marchand of Trudeau Corporation.

### Bormioli Rocco unveils a new visual identity

Canadian retailers will be the first in the world to have access to the newly rebranded Bormioli Rocco line in the fourth quarter. The Italian company, which has been manufacturing fine glassware since 1825 and has been distributed in Canada by Trudeau for the past 20 years, is undergoing a complete redesign.

The company has spent the past year developing an entirely new look and visual identity. The new logo and a cleaner image will soon appear on all packaging, websites, social media and catalogues. The new look will reflect a statement of ‘purity and simplicity’ that is aspirational and family-oriented, geared to entertaining at home. The company will also emphasize that the products are ‘made in Italy’.

In total, 300 new skus will feature the redesigned packaging and logo by the end of this year. In 2017, food storage items will also be included.

Jacques Dubuc will shift his duties as the new director of corporate business development to focus exclusively on building the glassware category.

### Las Vegas Market continues to grow

The Las Vegas Market reported an 8% increase in attendance at its summer market over last year, with gift buyer attendance up 28%. Overall, exhibitor participation topped 3,100, including a record 500 temporary exhibits, according to the show.

Buyers from all 50 states attended the summer market and international participation continued to be strong, with 73 countries represented, including Canada, Mexico, China and Panama.

The growth of the gourmet housewares and gift section has been a focus for the show since the refresh of C-11 in 2015. According to Dorothy Belshaw, president of gift and home decor, International Market Centers, the company is continuing to put an emphasis on the segment of the industry and has positioned the housewares segment of the market for the next step.

“We identified vertical segments within the industry that were underrepresented in the Western markets and one of those was gourmet housewares, gourmet food and specialty kitchenware products,” says Belshaw.

The show now sees more than 350 lines on display at the World Market Center. The growth has helped give independent specialty stores a place to attend in the west in order to gain inspiration for the holiday selling season.

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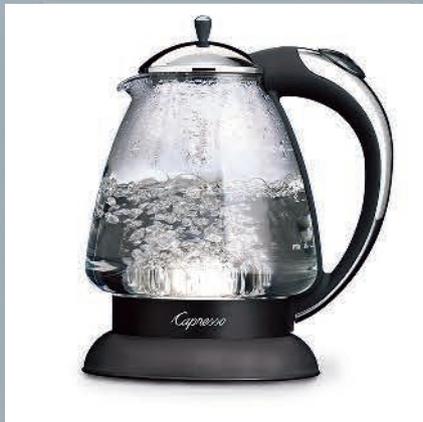
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### Chocolate ice cream is Canada's favourite

Baskin-Robbins has the scoop on ice cream consumption in Canada thanks to a national poll of adult consumers conducted by Leger Marketing. The poll reveals that 31% of Canadians prefer flavours with chocolate, followed by 21% for the vanilla varieties.

The results show that four in 10 Canadians enjoy ice cream at least once per week and 66% of Canadians enjoy it in order to satisfy a sweet tooth, with 70% of women choosing the sweet tooth rationale compared to men (62%).

Other findings: most Canadians prefer their ice cream served in a cone – two-thirds (65%) of them to be exact — with a cup or waffle bowl trailing closely behind (55%) and an ice cream sundae coming in third (47%).

### Blenders losing their smoothie appeal

The ongoing popularity of smoothies with American consumers is doing little to drive sales of home blending systems, according to a recent report from The NPD Group.

According to NPD, dollar sales of blender/mixer/chopper systems for the 12-month period ending May of 2016 were down 10% with unit sales down 6%. Ironically, the drop in retail sales of home blending systems come at a time when sales of smoothies at food service outlets are up 11%.

While market saturation and small declines in retail distribution are possible contributors to the drop in sales, the potential of being a fading fad is a concern worth examining, NPD officials note. A positive note for suppliers of blending systems is the continued growth in the healthy living trend and the inclusion of smoothies by many as part of a healthy diet regimen.

“Blending systems may be feeling a burnout effect as consumers begin to look for more variety in their dietary routines, following a period of submerging themselves in the smoothie trend,” says Joe Derochowski of NPD.

“Brands need to reposition themselves, emphasizing their multi-functionality, expanding the product’s audience to those interested in preparing more than just smoothies, and figure out creative new ways to engage in new applications and environments.”

### The top ten kitchen stores in the U.S.

FoodNetwork.com recently released its list of the 10 best kitchenware stores in the United States. The list includes many familiar names as well as some newcomers.

#### Artichoke, Over-the-Rhine, Ohio:

Opened in April 2016, owners Karen and Brad Hughes stock the store with products they would pick themselves, creating what they call a curated cookware collection.

#### The Garlic Press, Normal, IL:

The Garlic Press opened in 1974 as a tiny cookware specialty store. With several expansions, new partners and the addition of a cooking school, the store has cemented itself as a stand-out.

#### The Chopping Block, Chicago, IL:

Started in 1997 as a recreational cooking school, The Chopping Block now offers private events, a culinary boot camp and an array of gourmet housewares.

#### Fante's Kitchen Shop, Philadelphia, PA:

A family-owned store in Philadelphia's historic Italian Market, since 1906, Fante's has a large selection and many unusual kitchen tools for the home.

#### Peppercorn, Boulder, CO:

Peppercorn has been located in downtown Boulder for more than 35 years. The store was founded by Doris Houghland in 1977 as a cooking school and small gourmet kitchen store and has blossomed into a 12,000 square foot staple on the historic Pearl Street Mall.

#### Orange Tree Imports, Madison, WI:

This store has been in business for 40 years and carries an array of kitchenware, toys, cutlery, candy, gifts, specialty foods, cards, soaps and glassware.

#### A Cook's Companion, Brooklyn, NY:

Open since 1997, the store strives, “to provide the best curated selection of

kitchen tools,” for its customers, according to its website.

#### Hardisty's, Santa Rosa, CA:

Hardisty's Homewares provides the largest selection of specialty housewares and small kitchen appliances in all of Wine Country. It has been open for more than 90 years.

#### La Belle Cuisine, Emmaus, PA:

La Belle Cuisine is best known for hard-to-find classic kitchen tools that make cooking fun and interesting. Among the unique products in the store's assortment are trussing needles and linen twine, truffle shavers, tea cosies and almond grinders.

#### Utensil Kitchenware, Beacon, NY:

A practical, affordable kitchenware shop on Main Street in Beacon, NY.

### Changing mobile shopping patterns

While in the past, shoppers frequently browsed on a mobile device and then purchased from another device, this is becoming less common as interest in buying on smartphones grows, according to a new report from Bronto Software.

The report, *The Influence of Multi-Device Ownership on Ecommerce*, looks at how the proliferation of devices such as smartphones, wearables and tablets has impacted shopping behavior. One key finding is that shoppers typically purchase with the same device that they use to shop, whether or not in the same session.

“In our past research, consumers reported using their smartphones for browsing online and then switching to a larger screen or the physical store to purchase,” says Susan Wall of Bronto Software. “However, today's findings indicate consumers are willing to purchase from the devices they use to shop – and shopping has increased substantially across every device, including wearables. It's now imperative for brands to make the browsing and purchasing experience seamless and frictionless regardless of the device the consumer chooses.”

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# All in the family

Home Style talks to Anne-Marie Trudeau, who recently took over as Vice President of Sales



When Anne-Marie Trudeau was growing up in Montreal in the 1970s, ‘the company’ was often the main topic of conversation around the house. She and her two older brothers, Paul and Philippe, were indoctrinated into the family dynasty at a very young age and, having inherited an entrepreneurial spirit from their father, Robert, it was inevitable that all three would end up working at Trudeau Corporation. But that doesn’t mean their jobs were handed to them. They had to earn them.

Robert, a savvy business leader who has successfully steered his grandfather’s company to new heights, insisted his children follow three simple rules before they could join Trudeau full time. They had to have a university degree, they had to have worked somewhere else first, and they had to be at least 30 years old.

“With our French Canadian heritage, we are very passionate people, especially when it comes to the business,” says Anne-Marie. Those rules kept them grounded and made sure they were serious about going into the housewares industry. (It also eliminated any hint of nepotism.)

“As a kid, I found the business fascinating,” she recalls. “My father was so passionate about what he did that I saw the company as a living, breathing entity. He has always been ahead of the curve and I think that’s been the secret to our success. He is able to anticipate trends so we’re able to act on them first.”

Knowing what was expected of her, Anne-Marie graduated from Concordia University with a degree in Commerce and immediately got a job selling dental supplies across eastern Canada. Smart, confident and beautiful, with a strong, vibrant personality, she was perfect for sales. She had to build her own territory from the ground up and if she didn’t sell, she didn’t get paid. It turned out to be a

very valuable learning experience.

Then, after a brief stint selling door to door at Sprint Canada, she moved to Crain Drummond where she discovered what it was like to work for a huge company that employed thousands. It provided an exceptional sales training environment for Anne-Marie and her first opportunity to sell to retailers (though it was mostly with fashion and food).

By the time she was 30, Anne-Marie was ready to join her brothers at Trudeau. (Philippe is now president and Paul is vice president of international sales.) She started at Trudeau in February of 1998, just seven months after giving birth to her first son. And in March, she was off to China with Robert for three weeks. The goal was to get her out of her ‘comfort zone’ and put her in a product-oriented environment.

“It was a fantastic experience for me,” she recalls. “My father is a visionary – he started working in Asia in the 1970s.”

Trudeau has been a Disney licensee since 1987 and thanks to Robert’s wife, Deborah Shannon Trudeau, it has been a huge part of the company’s growth around the world. She and Deborah spent more than 10 years – and many trips to Asia – working together to develop the children’s license division.

Anne-Marie loved product development because it allowed her to follow the item from concept to final merchandising. “You understand everything that’s involved in bringing a quality product to market,” she says. “It was a privilege that I was able to start in this division.”

Before long she was responsible for selling to Disney stores and theme parks, always learning and listening along the way. She developed a keen understanding and appreciation of manufacturing timelines and the importance of meeting customer demands. And after Anne-Marie took some classes at Harvard, she was able to

hone her negotiation skills.

A born leader like her father, Anne-Marie was promoted to sales director and given some of Trudeau’s largest accounts. She rose to the challenge, building a strong team and motivating people with her passion.

“I believe you can go fast alone, but you can go much further as a team,” she explains. “We are all dedicated to bringing Trudeau further in the marketplace. I want the people around me to know that they can count on me as much as I count on them.”

It helped to have Jacques Dubuc, whom she has known for many years, as her mentor. Through Jacques, Anne-Marie was taught to have the utmost respect for their retail customers, and she is devoted to making them successful. As Jacques moves over to the glassware division, (see page 20) Anne-Marie has been promoted to vice-president of sales for Canada. She will work with new CEO Daniel Dufresne.

It’s a good fit. Housewares have always been a part of Anne-Marie’s very busy family life. After hours, she and her husband enjoy cooking and entertaining. It’s one reason she loves this industry so much – it’s all about products that bring people together over good food and wine.

Anne-Marie is also a mother to three active children, aged 19, 14 and 12. She helps out with their ski racing teams and volunteers at their school in addition to participating in a variety of sports herself. But that doesn’t slow her drive at the office. In her new role, she is determined to make her own mark at Trudeau in the years to come. Though there are many challenges facing her, like her optimistic father, she only sees opportunities. 🐾



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# Sharp marketer

With determination, hard work and a lot of trial and error, retailer Andre Eng has given House of Knives a competitive edge in Western Canada

By Jane Zatylny

Leisure activities may abound in the seaside city of Victoria, but when Andre Eng was growing up in the 1980s, spare time wasn't spent in parks or at the beach. "My father was a second generation vegetable farmer, so while my friends played, we worked hard on the family farm," he explains. "It's where I learned my work ethic."

That ethic has served Andre, the president of House of Knives and owner of 17 stores, very well over the past three decades.

Andre got his start in retail in 1987, when his elder brother, Allan, decided

to leave a stable government job and purchase an established House of Knives franchise in the Garden City's Hillside Mall. The corporate chain, established in 1979, had grown to approximately 50 locations across Canada by the late 1980s, and was operated by the Minit Corporation when Allan Eng bought his franchise.

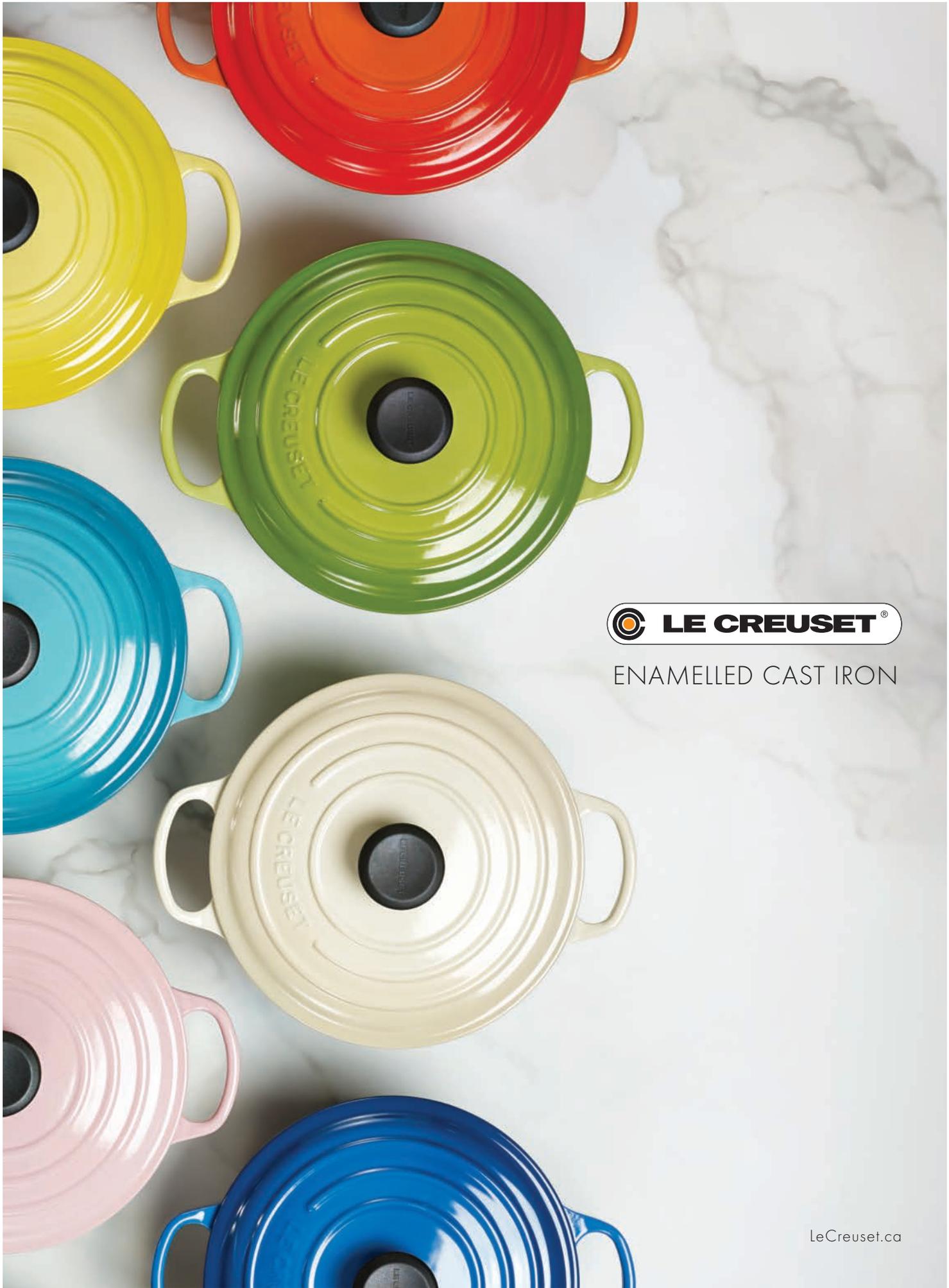
"Allan knew nothing about retail, nothing about cutlery," says Andre. "My Mom said at the time, 'Are you crazy, you're giving up a government salary, pension, and benefits to venture out on your own?'"

He smiles as he remembers wondering who would pay \$75 for a knife. "My mother used only a cleaver that she may have spent \$5 or \$10 on in Chinatown," he explains. "Even to this day, I have a hard time giving her quality knives. I have to lie to her and tell her, 'This is a sample, I can't sell it.'"

At the time, Andre was a high school student enrolled in a culinary program. He quickly gained an appreciation for quality knives.

Andre Eng hosts many in-store events demonstrating proper knife techniques.





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## Retail Profile: House of Knives



The Coquitlam store, like most stores in the chain, offers one of the largest selections of fine edge knives available at retail, all displayed behind glass cases for safety.



"I started helping Allan out on weekends," he says. "My best friend and I did demonstrations in front of the store when we were 17, showing people how to cut up fruits and vegetables."

Andre went on to Malaspina College in Nanaimo to further his culinary education, but eventually realized that being a chef wasn't the right career for him. He returned to Victoria to help his brother in his store and work on the family farm.

One of the most memorable days of Andre's life was when Allan made him an equal partner in the business as a surprise gift for his 21st birthday. "Something I'll never forget! I'm forever grate-

ful to Allan for believing in me."

Then came a turning point in 1992, when the leasing agent for Hillside Mall asked Allan if he'd like to open a second location in Langley. "My brother asked me if I wanted to work for him full time and help him open another store on the mainland," says Andre. "I remember thinking as he asked me, 'I don't even know where Langley is!'"

But the brothers accepted the offer and moved to the Lower Mainland. "When we got there, we thought, 'Wow, Langley is a long way from Vancouver,'" laughs Andre. "But we lived together like two single guys, working 12 to 14 hours a day, six to seven days a

week, with no furniture in the house. We were young and naive. I was 23, and he was 30 at the time."

The Eng brothers made another bold move three months later.

"A year or two prior to moving to Langley, a franchisee talked to us about taking over his eight House of Knives stores in the Lower Mainland," says Eng. "When we opened our Langley store, he came to us and repeated his offer. The timing wasn't great, but we decided to do it."

In three months, the brothers had grown their business from one to 10 stores – and Christmas was coming.

"We'd only ever been through Christmas with one store, and I remember thinking very pragmatically, we had one last year, and now we have 10, so whatever we ordered last year, we should just add a zero to it," says Andre.

The strategy didn't work; in fact, it resulted in a great deal of excess inventory. "We introduced products that customers in the Lower Mainland hadn't been exposed to, so that threw off sales," says Andre. "We had staff trying to sell things they weren't familiar with; things our Victoria staff knew inside out."

Emergency discussions followed with key vendors, including the late Ben Buerman of Wüsthof who had just started representing the line.

"He was just such a phenomenal individual," remembers Andre. "He was almost like a father figure to us. We grew our business together, and the thing that really set him apart was just that his heart was so good. When we explained our inventory problem, he said, 'How can I help?' and extended the payment terms indefinitely until we could sell through the inventory."

Owning 10 stores was a "huge eye opener," says Andre. "We made so many mistakes in such a short period of time. Back then we also did everything ourselves, which is why we worked 16 hour days."

Andre even remembers sleeping in the Langley store. "One time, I worked until 3 a.m. I lived in Richmond, but needed to be back in Langley at 7 a.m. so I used a knife roll for a pillow and slept behind

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## Retail Profile: House of Knives

the till. The manager got quite a scare when she arrived the next morning!”

Andre focussed on the store’s technology needs, product selection, visiting the factories and trade shows, and working with their vendor partners, while Allan handled the finances, operations, and real estate side of the business. Together, they continued to look for opportunities to expand and eventually added stores in Abbotsford, Kelowna, Kamloops, and Nanaimo.

In early 2003, the brothers decided to diversify by opening five housewares stores called Bella Vita.

“The Bella Vita concept was my brother’s, and it made a lot of sense because it helped us leverage our leases,” says Andre. “But the margins couldn’t support it.”

They decided to wind down the stores in 2007, selling the remaining West Vancouver Bella Vita to their sister, who eventually sold it herself three years ago.

While the House of Knives business expanded, in 2008 after 20 years together, the brothers decided to part ways, and Andre and his wife purchased the business from Allan.

When the recession hit that fall, it renewed Andre’s interest in full ownership rights to the franchise. He continued to negotiate with Minit Corporation, who had about 15-20 stores left at the time. In 2011, he negotiated the rights to the House of Knives name and has since then looked to grow the business. In 2012, they opened their first store outside B.C. in Red Deer, Alberta. Locations soon followed in Calgary’s Market Mall in 2014, and West Edmonton Mall in 2015. The current portfolio has 17 stores that range in size from 500 to 1,200 square feet. Since Andre has taken over the real estate for the company, he says, “there are still many challenges with high build costs and rents due to the majority of the stores being in A-class shopping centres which come with A-class rents.”

Today, Andre deals with about 50 to 60 suppliers to stock the 17 stores in B.C. and Alberta. Kitchen knives remain the stores’ bread and butter, followed by

sporting knives and personal care.

“Wet shaving has really grown for men,” says Andre. “There aren’t many products in the world that will help the environment, make you and your skin feel better, and save you money.”

The product selection also includes gadgets, barware, sharpening tools, and other top cook’s essentials, including a selection of cookware from Scanpan and Staub. These items underscore Andre’s belief in the importance of offering his customers the right tools to help them create a special meal, from the meat thermometer and carving knife, to the cutting board and Dutch oven.

Thirty years after Ben Buerman helped the Eng brothers recover from their overstock situation, Wüsthof knives are still one of House of Knives’ top selling cutlery brands. Andre also markets Shun, Victorinox, Global, Zwilling J.A. Henckels, Yaxell, and Kussi cutlery and accessories in display cases that line the walls of his stores.

“No one has changed the industry more than Shun,” says Andre. “If you told me 15 years ago that someone could compete with Henckels or Wüsthof, I would have said you’re

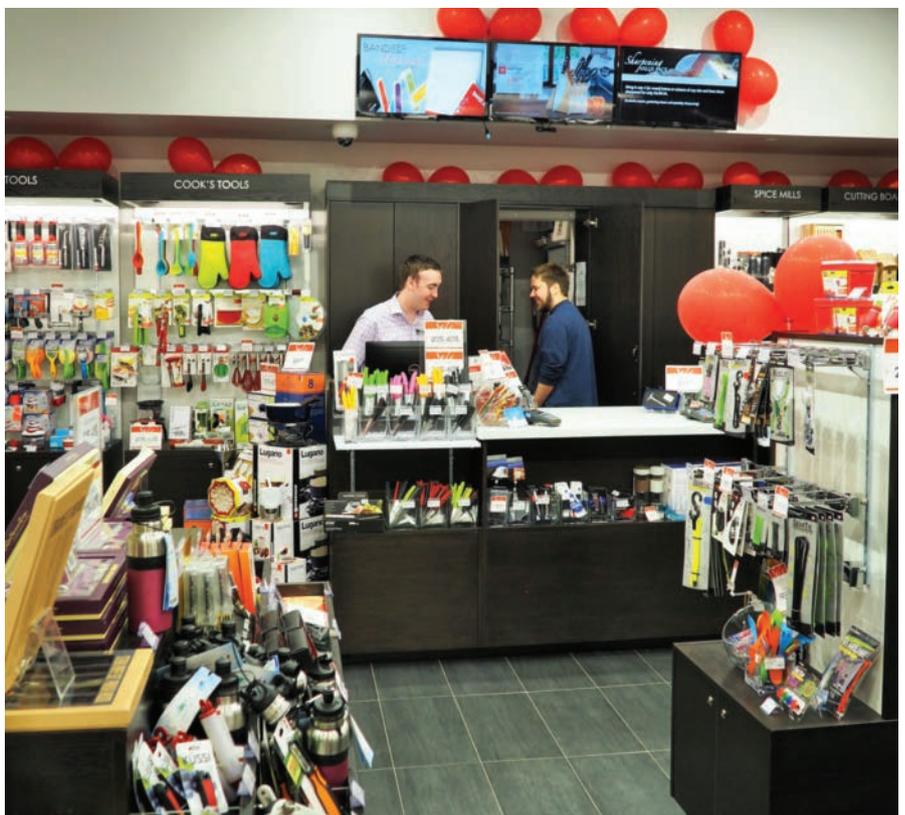


Andre is very hands-on when it comes to customer service and his staff are all well trained in the use and care of knives.

crazy. I compare what they’ve done to what *Under Armour* has done in the sports apparel industry.”

Since purchasing the House of Knives name in 2011, Andre also created an e-commerce website, which he says is doing well. “You have to do both, they help one another,” he explains. “Our website is great for research, and then our customers can come into the store for the experience.”

At his newly renovated Mayfair Mall



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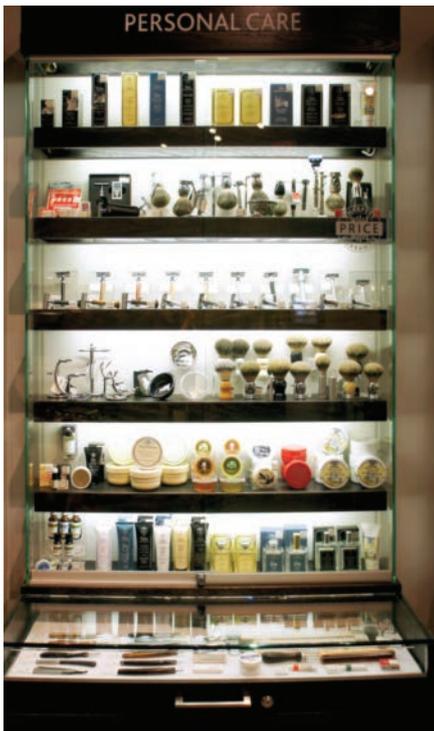
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## Retail Profile: House of Knives



location in Victoria, one of nine new concept House of Knives, a bright, modern store layout encourages browsing. Customers can try cutting carrots and potatoes on kitchen-height counters before they buy. "We're really focused on the customer experience," says Andre. "No one would buy a car without test driving it. Knives are no different."

The new concept stores also feature a Swiss Army Knife display with a pulley system, so customers can feel and touch the knives. "We're the first retailer in North America to use these displays."

Having a well-educated sales force has always been a critical factor in the stores' success. So each year, Andre takes one or two store managers to Europe to visit numerous world-famous factories in Switzerland, France, and Germany. Factories such as Victorinox, Wüsthof, Zwilling, DOVO, and others give the staff a greater understanding and appreciation of the manufacturing process and the commitment that goes into making a quality tool.

"Our mission statement is to improve the lives of all those around us through education and innovation," he explains. To that end, when a customer comes into the stores, Andre tells staff to think of it like someone walking into their home. "I use secret shoppers to ensure that experience," he says. "I'm huge on consistency and quality of experience."

"We're a specialty store," says Andre, "so I expect my staff to have special knowledge that they can impart to our customers. They need to provide a brief education about what makes a good knife, a better knife, and a great knife."

Product education is also the focus of the "Evenings with Andre" workshops that Andre plans to repeat at 12 of his stores this fall. Reminiscent of the demonstrations he provided to customers as a 17-year-old, these events teach customers the proper use and care of knives. Seeing his chef instructor at the Victoria event, held this spring, was

a special thrill for Andre, who enjoys working personally with his customers at all of these workshops.

Between the 17 stores and the 14,000-square-foot support office and distribution centre in Burnaby, House of Knives employs about 100 staff. Each store has sales associates, an assistant manager, and a store manager. There are five area managers, and about 15 support staff at the head office, including Andre and his wife Qua-Fung, who is director of marketing and responsible for the planograms and store design.

At the start of the year they brought on a new director of sales with multi-store chain experience, having helped a small chain of stores grow nationally over a short period of time. The objective was to focus on the customer experience in the stores, and the results are starting to pay off with many of the stores already experiencing double digit increases. The new director will be instrumental in helping grow House of Knives nationally again.

"House of Knives had a presence in Ontario for almost 40 years. Customers ask us through our website and phone calls when there will be a House of Knives store in Ontario again." The population density makes it a practical move at this time, versus opening in other provinces.

Speaking with Andre, it's clear that the years he spent on the family farm have influenced his business style. "I believe if you have a good attitude and a strong work ethic, you'll go far in life," he stresses. "These are two traits you can control, regardless of your talents."

Andre says that one of the most rewarding parts of his work is coaching his staff. "I want to be a 'difference-maker' in whatever I do," he says. "I like to empower my staff, and see them grow as individuals."

The other rewarding role, of course, is working on the front lines with customers, educating them about cutlery that will last them a lifetime. "I really get excited when their eyes light up as I tell them about a knife, and they say, 'I had no idea,'" he says. "It's about taking ownership and making a difference." 🐾

House of Knives is not only knives. The store also sells a wide range of personal care items, barware and cookware, left.



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# Cutting Edge

*What's new in knives, sharpeners and cutting boards*



The Nest Chop set of three chopping boards from Joseph Joseph, shown left, have an innovative, compact design. The boards nest neatly together and are designed to be self-standing for organized storage. Curved, easy-pour ends guide chopped food into a pan or bowl. Each board has a textured cutting surface for better grip and a non-slip base for stability while cutting. Offered in contemporary, modern colours from **DanESCO**.



**Paderno's** new range of cutting boards, shown right, includes Granite coloured polypropylene boards that are BPA-free and feature non-slip rubberized edges. They have easy-to-carry handles and won't dull knives. They're also dishwasher safe.



The Argent collection of premium flatware and steak knives is now available from **Royal Selangor**. The new assortment includes a distinct new range of stainless steel knives under the Hampton Forge umbrella, including the Willow shown above. Shown below, the classic Clevedon four-piece steak knife set.



The DELIO range of Acacia cutting boards and cheese tool sets from **PicnicTime** are distributed by Don Schacter + Assoc. The cutting board above features a chalkboard area and includes one cheese knife, three cheese markers, and one soapstone pencil.





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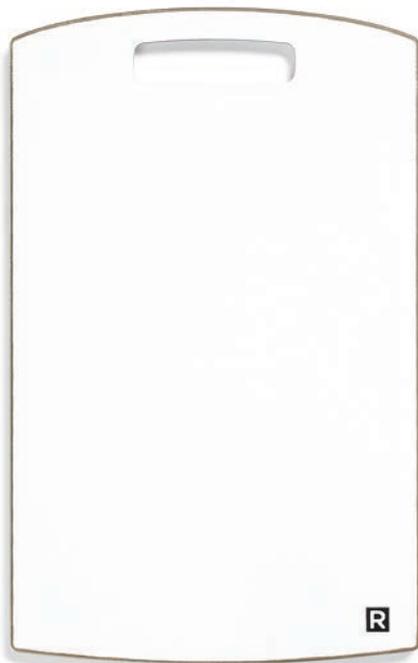
GRANITIUM NON-STICK

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# Cutting Edge



Building on a **ZWILLING** favourite, the new Pro Blonde series features the same innovative blade shapes and contoured bolster as the original ZWILLING Pro series. However, the new range of knives incorporates an updated holm oak wood handle for an elegant, contemporary design. This special wood comes from the Holm Oak tree native to the Mediterranean region, which takes its name from holm, an ancient word for holly.



The new **RICARDO** non-slip cutting boards are offered in two different sizes: 9.5 inches x 6 inches (24 cm x 15 cm) and 16.5" x 11.5" (42 x 29 cm). Made of polypropylene, these contemporary and stylish cutting boards will not dull knives. They are also dishwasher safe for easy cleaning.

The **Cuisinart** Classic 14-Piece Pakkawood Knife Block Set, right, makes prep work easy. With textured handles crafted from moisture-resistant pakkawood and blades forged from high-carbon stainless steel, these premium knives are a tasteful complement to any kitchen décor. The set comes in a natural block with pine interior and rubberwood exterior. Resistant to rust, stains and corrosion, each blade has a fine edge for smooth, exact slicing. As durable as it is versatile, this set comes with a limited lifetime warranty.

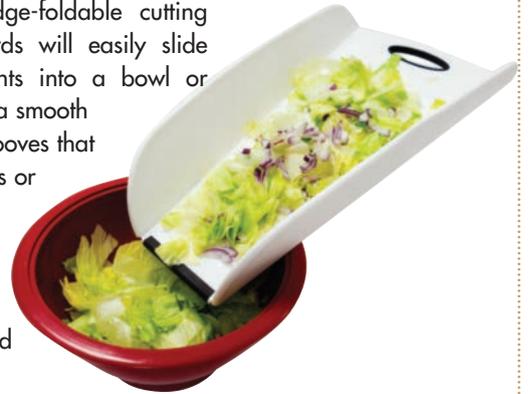


Crafted to combine precision, durability and design, the Cuisinart Elite Pro™ 15-Piece White Triple Rivet German Steel Knife Block Set offers the professional quality home chefs demand. This knife set is an elegant addition to any kitchen counter top. Made with premium German steel, the set consists of a variety of superb knives with tapered ground blades that narrow down to an ultra-sharp, fine edge. Designed with triple riveted white handles to keep them secure, these full-tang blades are resistant to rust, stains and corrosion. High-carbon stainless steel makes each blade an example of precision cutlery at its best. Built to last, this set comes with a limited lifetime warranty.

# Cutting Edge



**Norpro** (Ventures International) has launched new Edge-foldable cutting boards. The boards will easily slide chopped ingredients into a bowl or pan. They feature a smooth surface without grooves that won't retain odours or dull knives. Made of dish-washer-safe polypropylene, they're non-slip and won't warp.



**David Shaw** introduces the LAGUIOLE JEAN DUBOST line. These genuine Laguiole 'made in France' knives are crafted from beautiful olive wood and mixed exotic wood. They feature natural dark horn handles with signature bee motif and full tang stainless steel blades. Presented in a beech wood box.



The new Global Water Sharpener collection from **Browne** now comes with a stainless steel handle that has black dots, a red handle with black dots and a black handle with white dots. As well, the company is unveiling a set of two ceramic sharpening wheels.

Teakhaus by Proteak cutting boards from **Danica** are made with renewable teak, harvested from certified forests. Proteak's plantations have been certified under the criteria of sustainable forest management standards and have received a Chain of Custody certification from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Teak is recognized as one of the most durable, beautiful and workable hardwoods.



# Cutting Edge



This rectangular cutting board with handle from **Fox Run** is made of beautiful Acacia wood. It's five inches thick and ideal for cutting or serving. Shown below is Fox Run's large end grain prep Acacia board. It's big enough for any kitchen task. The end grain construction leads to less dulling of cutlery so wear and tear is minimized.



**Abbott** carries a wide range of Acacia wood boards in a variety of shapes and sizes. Shown below is the square board with strap. A round pizza board and extra long slim board are also available.



**Port-Style** is introducing new bamboo cutting mat sets, right. The mats are made from biodegradable bamboo powder. They're dishwasher safe, flexible and durable. Bamboo is knife friendly and there is a non-slip base to keep mats in place while in use. Each mat has a small hole in the corner for easy hanging.



The Guy Degrenne Group has been manufacturing premium cutlery in France for over 60 years using only the best quality steel. All cutlery is finished to the highest standards. The line is available in seven mineral colours, shown above. The knives are dishwasher and microwave safe. From **InterContinental Mercantile**.



Also from ICM, this round, organic cutting board is a stunning addition to any table. Cut against the grain to reveal the natural pattern of tree rings and to retain the rugged bark edge. With rustic burnt edges, it serves as a cutting board or serving platter. No two pieces are exactly alike

This new Zyliss kitchen knife from **Swiss-mar** has a smaller blade that is ideal for chopping and dicing. Made from high quality Japanese stainless steel, it's comfortable and easy to use with a soft touch grip handle. It comes with matching blade cover and a five year warranty.



Party guests will enjoy anything served on this solid wood and marble cutting board and serving platter. The board is easy to clean and can hang on the wall for easy storage. Available from **Wild Eye Designs**.





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# Countertop cooking

*What's hot in slow cookers, grills, deep fryers, toasters and more*

## Slow Cooker revolution gains speed

by Dave Adamchick, The NPD Group

Slow cookers have undergone quite a period of growth, up +11% YTD in dollars, and +7% in units. The category has grown on both units and dollars year over year for the last three years, and the growth has been accelerating in 2016. This is part of a broader trend in the kitchen electrics market, where appliances that provide convenience, save time, and reduce the cooking steps are the drivers of growth.

Recently we conducted a study that found 75% of meals consumed in the home are made in 15 minutes or less, so it makes sense that countertop cooking appliances are engines of growth. Amazon's 2016 Prime Day press release announced that in the U.S., a pressure cooker was their number one selling non-Amazon branded item, and the shelf positions Canadian retailers are giving to both pressure and slow cookers are an indication of the trend will continue.

With a slow cooker, it's possible to walk into your home at the end of the day, and have a warm meal ready and waiting. Slow cookers were one of the first categories to have a home automation/network connected product in the small appliance space, and innovative models that include an automatic stirring feature are top category performers. Slow cookers are present in 71% of Canadian households, second only to toasters in the Small Appliance space, an increase of +5% penetration vs. 2012. Our *Inside the Canadian Home: Appliances We Own & Use 2016* study found that despite this high ownership already, slow cookers were the number two category for next six months purchase intent among kitchen appliances for Canadian households.

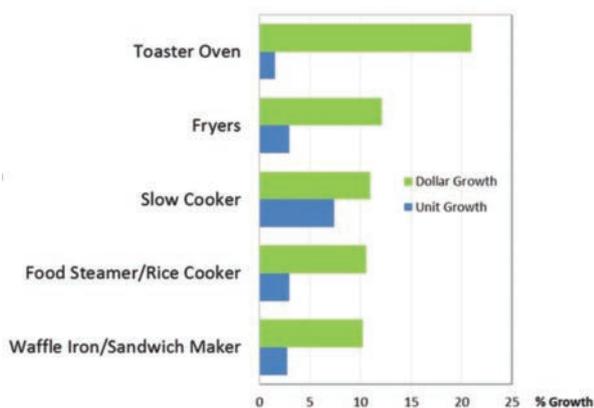
What does this all mean? When selling to customers, remember that the benefits driving their buying decisions lately have been making the process of meal prep faster, and easier – ensure you communicate those benefits. The market is demonstrating that there is still an opportunity for growth in even the most ubiquitous categories, especially where speed and convenience are featured.



This new six quart FlexCook Stay or Go slow cooker from **Hamilton Beach** features two different heat settings and time durations. There are three ways to program. The new FlexCook mode is able to program two different temperature and time settings in one cooking cycle. Or users can choose a single temperature and time. Both automatically switch to 'warm' when time expires. Dual screens let users keep an eye on how things are cooking with two screens. In the FlexCook mode, each screen will show the temperature setting and remaining time. Hamilton Beach will also unveil two new grills this fall. The 5-in-1 Cooking Grill can be used as an indoor grill, griddle, panini maker, full grill, half grill and half griddle. It comes with two reversible grids (flat or ribbed). Also opens flat to double cooking surface.



YTD June'16 Growth %





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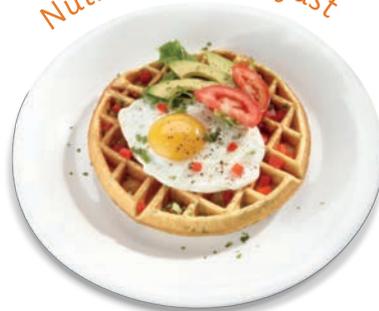
# Cuisinart®

## Introducing the New Vertical Waffle Maker

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*Nutritious Breakfast*



*Savoury Sandwiches*



*Delicious Desserts*



Enjoy the endless possibilities

**#WAFFLEart**

# Countertop cooking

The **Chef'sChoice** professional indoor electric grill produces perfectly grilled meat or vegetables quickly and conveniently. It has a ceramic coated cast aluminum plate design and features a superior plate design that ensures even heating. The ample surface can cook several different foods at once. The grill plate is lightweight and lifts out easily for clean-up. It also has a stainless steel drip tray and an adjustable temperature control. Model 878, shown right, also features a "Ready to Grill" indicator light and illuminated On/Off switch.



The new **T-fal** SuperGrill, above, offers super searing thanks to its diecast plates and powerful 1800 watt design. Precise thermostat control provides a perfect grilling experience for different ingredients. It also opens flat so it can be used in the so-called BBQ position, making it ideal for entertaining. The SuperGrill has a big drip tray and removable non-stick grill plates that can go directly into the dishwasher.

**KRUPS** achieves a perfect balance of intelligent design, accessible functionality and flawless performance with the new Savoy Collection, below. Two and Four slice Toasters offer 6 browning settings, rotating precision control knob, touch pad buttons and high speed performance and delivers uniform browning. The sleek design and high end finish will compliment any kitchen décor.



The **Nesco** 11-litre Pressure Cooker from Metal Ware features 1500 Watts of power. It has an aluminum alloy non-stick inner pot, digital controls and high/low pressure. Presets programs allow for pressure cooking, browning, steaming, slow cooking, rice cooking and keep warm. The 'keep warm' kicks in automatically after time runs out. The unit has a stainless steel body and lid and comes with a measuring cup, spoon, condensation drip cup and chrome rack. It's perfect for processing high acid foods like fruit jellies, jams, sauces and salsas. The pressure cooker holds nine half pint canning jars, six pint canning jars or five quart-sized canning jars. It's available October 1st.



# Countertop cooking



Modern consumers looking for a healthy way to cook will appreciate **Cuisinart's** new CookFresh Digital Glass Steamer. A powerful steam system delivers steam from the top down, surrounding food to cook it quickly and evenly. The five-litre glass cooking pot is large enough for family-size portions of vegetables, fish, chicken, rice and much more. In addition, the steamer's one-litre water tank conveniently lifts off to fill. Healthy cooking is today's biggest culinary trend, and the new Cook-Fresh Digital Glass Steamer makes it quick and easy.

The **Breville** Smart Oven Pro, right, uses Element IQ technology that orchestrates five electronic quartz heating elements to move heat when and where needed. A unique Slow Cook function uses convection heat to simmer food on high or low for up to 10 hours. Also new is the Thermal Pro banquet skillet, below right. It offers even heat distribution with thick, aluminum construction. The electric thermostat allows precise temperature settings and the large capacity is perfect for big family meals or entertaining. The new Die-cast Smart toaster, left, has a sleek styl-



ish design fits in any kitchen and the extra wide slots can accommodate up to four slices of artisanal bread. Other features include "A Bit More" bagel setting and "Auto Lift and Look" will gently check on the toast.



The unique oval design of this latest offering from **Swissmar** adds an incredible amount of versatility to any raclette party. Suitable for up to eight people, the set includes reversible cast aluminum non-stick grill plate, eight raclette dishes, eight heat-resistant spatulas and variable heat control. Consumers can grill their favourite meats and veggies on the top grilling surface, while melting cheesy goodness in the raclette dishes. For easy to prepare, fun and healthy meals or entertaining, the Raclette is an essential appliance. Available to Canadian retailers in the fall 2016.

# Countertop cooking



Ricardo's six-quart slow cooker, right, has a brushed stainless steel finish and programmable digital controls, right. It allows for programmable cook times from 30 minutes to 12 hours. The removable ceramic body is dishwasher-safe. The new RICARDO automatic rice cooker can cook virtually all types of rice with seven functions. Ingredients can be sautéed directly in the non-stick cooking pot before adding rice to enhance flavor.



Salton's new Party Grill and Raclette can grill fish, chicken, sausage and vegetables on the top grill while the cheese melts beneath in the eight non-stick pans. The temperature control in front, powerful 1400 watts and reversible grill plate, with flat and ridged sides, make this raclette easy and convenient. The grill is protected from overheating and has anti-slip feet for added safety. This easy-to-clean raclette comes with eight spatulas and fondue forks.

The new Salton Lazy Susan Hotray is ideal for pizza parties. The cordless round warming tray will ensure food stays warm. Simply plug the warming tray in for eight minutes, detach the cord and enjoy warm food for 60 minutes. It features a 360° rotational design for easy sharing with guests and an attractive brushed stainless steel finish.



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## Hamilton Beach®

# Home Scents

Made in England, the Wax Lyrical range from **Royal Selangor** includes beautiful candles and diffusers designed for small rooms or large areas. Fragrances have been selected to reflect British gardens and are packaged for gift giving. Scents include Fired Earth assam and white cedar, right, and lemon verbena, below. A reusable wax filled tin is ideal for travel.



Made in Ireland, Max Benjamin home fragrances from **David Shaw** use premium natural ingredients and artisan craftsmanship. A unique soy, coconut and beeswax blend is used to enhance the fragrance. The allergen-free diffusers and candles are packaged in premium gift boxes. The line includes a Classic Collection with 15 fragrance blends, a Tea and Coffee Collection with five blends and the Holiday collection, shown above.



The new collection of home fragrance lamps from **Lampe Berger** features the Satin Pack, left, offered in frosty white or red with an orange cinnamon aroma. The Diamond Lamp, right, has an Art Deco style with silver mounting and a diamond tip. It's available in three colours with a shiny, textured surface.



**Abbott** offers several distinctive candle designs. Shown below are the Reversa cylinder hurricane vases, available in two sizes.



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# Buyers brave scorching temperatures to discover what's new at the Toronto Gift Fair

First the good news. The Toronto Gift Fair – held August 7th to 10th at the Toronto Congress Centre and International Centre – is still primarily a writing show and housewares retailers arrived this summer ready to buy. Many of the exhibitors we spoke to reported writing higher than average orders from some of their best customers.

Sadly, the number of customers continues to dwindle, and very few new ones are opening up stores. Traditionally the August gift fair has always attracted a smaller audience but even so, the numbers were clearly down compared to last year. Of course, it didn't help that Toronto was experiencing some of the hottest weather in years, and many retailers were busy catering to summer tourists. But based on the responses to our retail survey, there is still plenty of room for improvement.

The biggest complaints involve the number of big suppliers who have pulled out (including Browne, Fox Run and All-Clad) and the lack of a retailer

coffee lounge or luncheon area, inadequate shuttle services between buildings and poor product categorization. It will be another two years before the International Centre exhibitors are

merged with the Congress Centre but show organizers hope to address many of these concerns before then. The results of our 'unofficial' retail survey appear on the following pages.



The Home Style Housewares Showcase featured 24 of the hottest new kitchenware products, above. Below, Zwilling's Gourmet Kitchen Stage kept retail customers entertained.



# Retailer Round-Up

*Home Style asked housewares retailers across the country:*

**What changes would you like to see at the Toronto Gift Fair to make it more beneficial for your business?**

**Laurie Oehy**

**Academy of Culinary Arts, Toronto**

As a smaller retailer the gift show is quite important to me. I not only see what's new from my existing vendors but also get to find new suppliers and source that 'must have' item.

I have attended both shows for over 30 years. In that time I cannot say much has changed. The show has become increasingly smaller and the 'vibe' just isn't there anymore.

I would prefer a smaller show devoted to the housewares industry exclusively. It's hard to stay focused when you are walking past booths selling nightgowns or pillows in the same building as the cookware. I feel it would also be better to have it located downtown. Although I live in the city I can't imagine wanting to come to Toronto and stay at the airport.

**Dave Abrams**

**Ares Accessoires de Cuisine, Dorval, QC**

I attend the show in Chicago annually and others sporadically. I have been to Toronto in the past, but there really is no comparison. We go to Chicago to source different items and new suppliers. We also get a sense of upcoming trends.

Toronto is a less "innovative" show. It's pretty much the same suppliers, and very little new that we didn't see in Chicago. We attend the gift fair primarily to maintain our relationships with the head office personnel of our current

suppliers. But we're always hoping to 'trip across' that one new item or supplier that will justify the trip.

As far as changes, the most obvious would be a section of new and innovative products and suppliers that the organizers actively pursued – perhaps from Ambiente or other shows – to create excitement, and a buzz. That would hopefully encourage some of the Canadian vendors who have dropped out over the years to return, notably the small appliance suppliers.

**Fontaine Wong, Ming Wo, Vancouver**

The Toronto Gift Fair is fairly important as there are exhibitors that we don't get to see at the larger shows. These suppliers provide us with products that fill our day-to-day retail needs and even a large percentage of our speciality niche needs as well. Buying through Canadian suppliers often eliminates the brokerage hassles and U.S. currency payment.

Comparing it to the other shows outside of Canada is like comparing apples and oranges. The external shows are all about the big launches and looking for new products that will have the next It Factor. The Toronto show allows us to revisit new products that we may have missed or need reviewing again. It also provides us a more intimate relationship with our suppliers that we often do not find elsewhere.

It would be nice if there was a more cohesive floorplan with products that

complement each year, such as housewares with tabletop and dinnerware.

**Candace Sutcliffe**

**C.A. Paradis, Ottawa**

We do a fair amount of buying directly at the show but more importantly, the Toronto show is an opportunity for us to connect face to face with suppliers and sales managers to discuss potential ways we can grow our businesses together. It is also a way for us to hopefully discover new suppliers and keep up with the newest product trends.

The show needs to be shorter to attract more vendors and there also needs to be more flexibility with accepting new exhibitors. I think all the housewares should be in Halls 10/11, with tabletop and gift in Halls 8/9 and general gift and jewelry in Hall 7.

There also needs to be more relevant keynote speakers. As the independent retail base shrinks in Canada, the companies that survive are those that are moving forward and keeping up with the changing consumer landscape. I would personally benefit from hearing from marketing specialists, e-commerce strategists, event planners, etc.

**Fred Pritchard**

**Golda's Kitchen, Mississauga, ON**

We attend both the winter and summer shows however we only allocate one day to the show each season, and we

usually only stay in Hall 7.

I have repeatedly asked for WiFi in the exhibit halls with no success. Our software works in the cloud, so it is helpful to have our live system in the vendor's booth. I have to walk 15 minutes to the lounge for access in order to look up a question each time we are deciding on a product in a booth. And in the winter, more coat checks are required at each entrance. And the fact they still charge for coat check is ridiculous. It should be free.

Silly rules are another annoyance. It is so difficult to register a new person in order to get a badge. And why are some exit doors closed at 6 p.m. just when everyone is trying to leave the building?

The atmosphere at the show has diminished over the years. CanGift is a member-based organization and their members need us more than we need them. I can get all the products I need in Chicago. If I stopped going to the Toronto show, my vendors would beat a path to my door. They already do.

Basically, the attitude at the top needs to change, and they need to warm up to retailers and stop being so cheap already. I am encouraging the housewares vendors to leave the show and make their own show once per year. It will be more efficient and welcoming for all involved.

## **Daryl Katzenberg** **Kitchen Stuff Plus, Toronto**

Some of our biggest vendors are still there although there is nothing I do at the show anymore that cannot be done via e-mail or office meetings. The Housewares Hall 7 is not really a housewares hall any longer. What used to take me three days now takes less than a day. It's strange to think that we're the third largest city in North America yet we have a housewares section akin to that of a small regional town.

The show is locked in a vicious cycle of vendors pulling out as there are fewer buyers. Vendors are going to say that many independent retailers are going out of business, which is true. And if it's

a writing show but they are not taking orders or being profitable, I guess it doesn't make sense for them to be there.

Conversely, someone who owns one or two stores is not going to go through the expense of paying for a flight, hotel, meals, etc. to come to such a bad show. It should just be once a year for 3 days.

## **Mario Brochu, Cuisina, Quebec City**

The Toronto show is important but I could do business without it. I attend the Chicago show as well but it is impossible to compare the two. I think it would be a good incentive if the Toronto Gift Fair offered retailers real discounts for flights, hotels or restaurants.

## **Natalie Nelson** **The Pan Tree, Sherwood Park, Alberta**

The show gives us the opportunity to view new products in person, source new vendors and forge relationships with existing suppliers. Having face to face interactions with suppliers gives us the opportunity to discuss buying and marketing strategies and other business ideas that might be difficult to discuss by email or over the phone.

We also attend the Chicago show every couple of years. They really cater to retail attendees by offering free lunch, transportation and WiFi. The cooking shows are great and the seminars are amazing! However, it isn't always the best place to do business as most suppliers are American and can't effectively cater to small Canadian businesses.

I would like to see all suppliers in the Congress Centre. Having two venues makes it difficult to get everything done efficiently and makes it difficult to compare products. There also needs to be wide spread access to free WiFi and cost effective food options. We will often purchase meals outside the show to save money (which is inconvenient).

This might be a stretch, but I'd love to see a shuttle service going to downtown after show hours. The Congress Centre is in such a remote area with little for food and entertainment options. How

great would it be to visit some of the restaurants that Zwilling featured at their cooking stage this year!

## **Donna-Marie Hyde** **The Culinary Poet, Goderich, ON**

We attend both shows. It is nice to see the new products in person and to ask questions without feeling pressured or to take information home to ponder. It is a convenient way to explore and keep the buying in Canada. As a retailer we need to stay informed on the new products and trends to keep our stores fresh. But we need to somehow attract more new vendors while at the same time make it more enticing for the retailers. I have attended this show since the 1980s and have watched a large disconnect develop with the retailers over the years. Fewer vendors, fewer visitors. I keep hearing more vendors talking of pulling out and going into the independent showrooms, which then takes more of our time off the show floor.

## **Marlene Koskineemi** **The Kitchen Nook, Thunder Bay, ON**

The Toronto show is extremely important for our business because, as seasoned retailers, we would never order a product without seeing it first. And we like to maintain contact with our vendors. However, I feel the U.S. shows treat buyers extremely well compared to the Toronto show. I believe there should be a complimentary cocktail reception of some kind where we as buyers can talk to suppliers in a more casual atmosphere. I also feel that the show needs to categorize their products better.

## **Alison Fletcher** **The Cookery, Toronto**

This show is critical for me as well as all the small and growing local Canadian suppliers who can't afford to exhibit in Chicago. These businesses create local retail jobs as well as local manufacturing and logistics jobs. This is an integral part of our economy, specifically for smaller

and seasonal communities.

I attend the Toronto show because I buy 85% of my goods from Canadian businesses (local and artisanal, the Canadian offices of international brands and local distributors). But I also attend in order to maintain this show for our housewares industry. I see it as absolutely necessary to the health and viability of our market sector.

The show, in terms of days, is too long for the number of exhibits and buildings. If you can cover Paris or Chicago in two or three days – which you can – you can certainly do Toronto in same amount of time. Show organizers should take the pressure off the suppliers to take a full four to five days out of their normal business. It should only be two or three days. The density of visitors is very sparse, making it seem under-attended and not a good investment for either visitors or suppliers. Shorten, it and you build density, motivation, and cache.

The quality of the speakers and seminars is far lower than where it should be. We need better industry knowledge and innovation. And the food and drink options are also worse than where they should be. The show has to adjust its offering to woo housewares companies back, for the good of the entire sector. Shorten the show, reduce costs, be flexible in terms of space,

For retailers, CanGift should provide better opportunities for learning. Perhaps get Enterprise Toronto to come and do a series on moving your business from bricks to clicks. Or get Amazon to do a session on putting your inventory on their site as a second revenue source. Or get Shopify to come and explain how to create a great webstore. Get Canada Post to come and help vendors figure out how to use EST online. (It's not that straightforward but helpful once you learn it.) Get someone from Google to come and help with listings, SEO, Search algorithms. A Pinterest expert or blogger in visual merchandising could come in for seasonal display innovation. Arrange tours of Toronto retail shops like they do in Chicago. This can be fee

based if it's good enough.

Consider a new location that takes advantage of the great restaurants and entertainment Toronto has to offer. The airport is not great in this respect and taking a long bus ride every day to get to decent restaurants is brutal. It reduces Toronto's ability to market itself properly to show visitors. If you are downtown, you should be able to link the show page to Yelp results for great restaurants. Create opportunities for walking tours of the city and restaurant hoppers. Provide store tours with top retailers in Toronto, both in and out of gift and kitchen. Invite retail leaders in international chains to present trends globally they are seeing. Pantone colour and retail trend presentations with global leaders would be welcome. Woo them with our fantastic restaurants and hotels (a night at the Drake and dinner in West Queen West, voted by Vogue as one of the world's coolest neighbourhoods).

For suppliers, shorten the show, reduce the costs, be more flexible in terms of space and provide more marketing opportunities (seminars, blogs, social media). Give the exhibitors an opportunity to woo buyers, perhaps with a wine and cheese party at day's end?

### **Sigrid Wolm**

#### **Kitchen To Table, Orangeville, Ontario**

Because I am only one hour away from the show, I go to both but I only stay for two days at the most. It's just a sign of the times, but all shows have fewer visitors than five years ago. If we would had only one show a year in Toronto, we would have more suppliers exhibiting and retail buyers attending. All parties are focusing on expenses and the organizers need to keep costs in line. Maybe we need to rotate the shows to appeal to a wider audience: one year in Toronto, one in Montreal and one in Calgary. I would love it if the Toronto show could run from Friday to Monday, 9 a.m. until 6 p.m.

Whatever is offered on the show floor has to be exciting and of interest to the buyers rather than products selected by

exhibitors. Organizers need to make sure that all suppliers from Canada are displaying only their newest items – not the everyday stuff we've already seen.

A centrally-located demo kitchen should feature a few well-known chefs, perhaps three per day.

The August show at the Congress Centre was disappointing. The food variety was poor and very expensive and the service was not what it used to be. I will not purchase overpriced food and will walk to my vehicle and eat my lunch instead.

In terms of product categorization, the show has to be more streamlined in order to effectively add value for both the suppliers and retailers.

### **Claire Breeze**

#### **Kitchen Boutique Stores, Alberta**

It may sound basic but I would love to see more comfy seats. It is rare in most of the exhibit booths to find adequate seating for longer meetings. I bring several large orders to the show which need doing while there. If there were more places to sit comfortably and conduct business, that would be appreciated.

I know the cost over the years has prompted many of my big vendors to pull out but I miss the days when there was more spent on "grabbing" the customers' attention (free stuff). I used to come home with something after each show to give to each one of my staff. This year I came home with two reusable bags and one notebook. Networking is not what it used to be. In the past, exhibitors would take us out for dinner and get to know us better. Staff at the booths looked tired, bored and fairly complacent. I'm not sure if it's because I've been to the show so many times, but the exhibitors all seemed to have the same stuff. I think it would be good to be more careful about who is participating so that eight different exhibits don't all look the same.

The events that are held during the day should be in the evening. I need every second on the floor so I rarely attend any of the seminars. It would be

great to go to these after hours and have my ticket include a really good dinner. The food in Hall 7 was crazy expensive.

**Caren McSherry**

**The Gourmet Warehouse, Vancouver**

I have been attending the show for 20 years. It is very important for The Gourmet Warehouse, especially now that the Canadian dollar is doing so poorly and we spend a lot of money at the shows, especially when show attendance discounts are offered. It is the time to see, feel and touch the products. This cannot be duplicated by sales reps regardless of how good they are.

We attend a lot of international shows and there is a big difference. Toronto's bus service is terrible/ I no longer waste my time waiting for the bus that never comes. We taxi to the show every morning as the 30 minutes plus delays are unacceptable.

As well, there are not enough places to get coffee or lunch. The only cappuccino stand is located outside the hall so scanning in and out is a nuisance.

We spend a lot of money to bring our entire buying team to Toronto only to discover that companies have pulled out and taxis or arranged pickups are needed to see their new products. This minimizes our time spent at the show. Perhaps the show needs to be more accommodating to the housewares vendors to maintain their loyalty. All related industries should be together in one building so shopping can be more efficient and no company is missed.

**Andre Eng, House of Knives, Victoria, B.C.**

We travel the world to source and work with our vendor partners both in Asia, Europe and America and unfortunately the Gift Fair is the last on our list as we see everything we have to see and more at other shows. This was our first time attending in four years.

There should be only one show. It would provide a greater focus for both vendors and buyers. In today's competitive market nobody needs or wants more travel. Now the question is when

to hold the show. I think it has to be after Chicago, between June and August.

**Phyllis Kraemer**

**The Keeping Room, Dundas, ON**

I go to both January and August shows. and I walk from open to close every day. It is impossible for us to cover the whole show in just four days. However, changes are needed. The show management seems to be moving in a reactive instead of a proactive mode. They need to create a different model of business to keep exhibitors. So many big suppliers are pulling out, there has to be a better way to fill the spaces. Perhaps a collage of different elements could be presented? The "red dot" design awards could be featured or perhaps a "by hand" component with local artisans who make pottery, carved wooden tools or food items (hot sauces made in Ontario are big sellers right now). And yes, even the food section needs to be revamped.

I have always looked forward to the seminars at the show. But having two "interior designers" as the speakers for two shows in a row has stopped me dead on that front. I want to hear from experts in our industry who know about social media, window display designing advertising both for on-line and print media, how to hire the best staff – the things I need to run my business.

There used to be a Buyers Lounge in the Dixon entrance area. It was comfy and quiet with coffee for buyers. Depending on the time of day it was a welcome change but it didn't last. The charging station was great and the coffee was welcome.

As a small retailer, my biggest challenge is to get over to International Centre after going through the Congress Centre. It's difficult to get through all the different little exhibits. Yet I absolutely love the opportunities afforded me as a independent retailer to be able to search through booths where you don't think you'll find a single thing in there, such as the "drug" related exhibits with bongs and incense. Yet in one of those booths, I found a magnificent col-

lection of unusual and inexpensive mortar and pestles.

The Toronto Gift Fair is so important to our industry but as I see more vendors dropping out, I worry about the future of the show. As time goes on, more and more distributors expect retailers to use on-line catalogues and are eliminating their sales representatives. If they also stop exhibiting at the show, well, I cannot imagine where the Canadian housewares industry will end up.

**Sharon Yeast**

**Gifts & Gadgets, Spruce Grove, AB**

This show is important to my business because as a retailer, I want to be forward thinking and up to date on all the new products on the housewares side.

I always attend the January show and have gone to the last two August shows as well. I love the Chicago show and am planning to go next March. I like it because it shows us what our suppliers will have in the next six to nine months down the road.

I am sad to see the show shrinking. I don't agree with the companies that want us to take the time off the show floor to go to their corporate showrooms. These companies have given up their exhibit spaces completely yet they are not offering us any "real" deals considering the money they're saving by not having a booth. They feel it is a more relaxed atmosphere for retailers in town for the show to go to their showrooms. But it takes a lot more time on our part to be able to go to their business location if it's away from the airport and it really is not fun cabbng it in the winter. This new trend with former exhibitors is one of the biggest threats and will jeopardize the future success of the shows. Yet, as always, I love the social part of trade shows and the ability to network with other store owners from across the country.

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*Home Style welcomes your letters, comments and suggestions. Please email laurie@homestylemag.ca*

# Toronto Gift Fair Highlights



**"Food Trip To..."** was honoured with a Best Exhibitor award at the gift show. Founded by Max Rosselin, left, and Kevin Marlet, the company was created to take consumers on a culinary adventure – in a box. The 'turn key' boxes each have a surprise destination and contain recipe cards, a cultural card, a music playlist, decor items and six traditional products to prepare a meal from a featured country such as Brazil, Greece or Finland.



Mitchell Giles and his mother Donna King, who distribute the popular Euro Scrubby, said they had a very good show.



Linda Heidman proves that Swissmar pepper mills really measure up!



Becky Parr introduced Perfect Slice bakeware with Stephen Greco of BergHOFF International. The pans have marked rims and edges to make cutting slices quick and easy.

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# Toronto Gift Fair Highlights



Caren McSherry of Gourmet Warehouse, left, and Candace Sutcliffe of C.A. Paradis arrived bright and early Sunday morning.

## *On the scene at the Toronto Gift Fair...*



Kathy Rutt of Linen Chest with celebrity chef Ricardo, left, and Gilles Gosselin of Starfrit, distributors of the Ricardo kitchenware line.



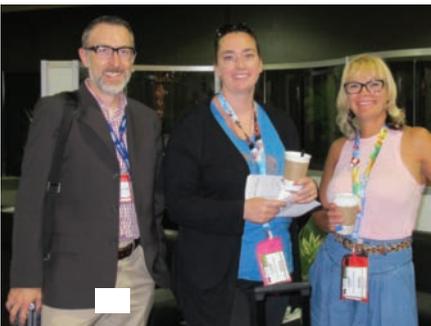
Tori Schofield, left, and Gino Andreoli, right, of Linen Chest with Frank Sasse of SBO (Peugeot).



Marty Linder, left, welcomes Marlene and Mariah Koskiniemi to the SBO Distributors booth.



Representing Legacy, the new owners of Edgecraft, Ian Gough, right, was on hand at the Chef's Choice exhibit. He's shown with Andre Lessard, left, and Darwyn Jenkins of Hendrix.



Sales agent Chris Clement is shown with Claire Breeze, centre, and Lianna Benny of Kitchen Cupboard in Alberta.



Karen Haverkamp, left, and Dodi Morgan of The Kitchen Cupboard in Listowel, Ontario.



Lloyd Jewkes, left, and Noreen Nunn of Antigonish Stores visit Cathy Campbell of Paderno.



Spyros Theoharis of Don Schacter + Associates with Sharon Yeast of Gifts and Gadgets.



Monty Grunebaum of Port-Style Enterprises with Nancy McCarten of In Season.



Peggy Little of Edgecraft/Chef's Choice with Randy Freedman of Degrees Kitchen Store.

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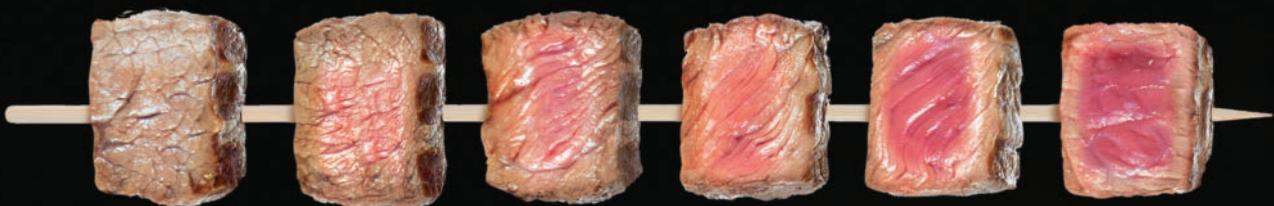
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