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Canada's Housewares Magazine

November 2017

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Opening Lines

Wage hike hurts more than helps

Sometimes I wonder if provincial government policy-makers hate entrepreneurs in this country – especially retail entrepreneurs. With the impending increase in the minimum wage, which will be implemented despite cries of outrage from those affected, retailers continue to face obstacles that probably make them question the value of running a business at all.

Fortunately, the Feds have backed off on small business tax rate reforms and employee discounts, but I worry about the future of the few store owners and suppliers who are already struggling. The independent retailers who are still with us in Canada are exceptional at what they do. They have to be. I have profiled many of them and have come to appreciate their incredible work ethic, their passion and their dedication to both their customers and their employees at a time when it's increasingly difficult to make a profit. That's why the timing of this wage increase to (eventually) \$15 per hour – which amounts to a 32% increase! – couldn't come at a worse time.

Of course, everyone deserves to make a living wage but this is too much, implemented too quickly, and without input from those affected on the front line. Most good operators already pay their full time employees a decent wage and offer good benefits – including a generous store discount and other perks. Many become like family and are an integral part of the operation so they are paid accordingly. What we're talking about with this wage hike are students and other temporary or part-time workers, most of whom live at home and aren't the primary breadwinner. Yet if you're giving substantial pay increases to your part-timers, there's a good chance the full-timers will expect a bump as well. And it's not just the wage increase, there is also CPP, EI and WSIB plus vacation pay, etc.

For this issue, I surveyed independent retailers in Ontario to find out how the increase would affect them and was dismayed by the responses. (See page 46.) A few refused to go on the record because they were afraid of how their comments could be misinterpreted, and that was even more disheartening. They have been criticized in public for being too greedy, or not being fair to front line workers. The truth is it's a constant challenge to run a store – from finding good employees to paying exorbitant rents to keeping the lights on. Competition from online sellers and changing technology only adds to the daily struggle, as does this unreasonable wage hike. Retailers will be forced to cut back or work more hours themselves.

Loblaw CEO Galen Weston says this "aggressive" wage hike (which affects about a quarter of all employees in Ontario) will add \$190 million a year to the company's expenses. Others, like Dollarama, will be forced to raise prices. Some may not be able to stay in business, particularly in the restaurant industry which employs 470,000 people in Ontario alone and just went through a very expensive menu overhaul in order to include government-mandated calorie counts.

Of the nearly 1.2 million businesses in Canada, 98% have fewer than 100 employees. Most entrepreneurs go into business for the freedom and the ability to be their own boss. They are risk takers and hard workers and the backbone of many industries. Few expect to get rich, but most hope to at least make a comfortable living. That may not be possible if the government continues to penalize rather than promote small business ownership in this country.



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People In The News

- Breville recently appointed **Stephen Krauss** as President, North America, and **Damian Court** as EVP Product and Sales, North America.

- Five new directors have been elected to the International Housewares Association's board of directors and a new board chairman has been named. The new directors are **Neal Asbury** of The Legacy Companies; **Steve Greenspon** of Honey-Can-Do International; **Yvette Laugier** of PSP North America/Peugeot; **Thomas Nichols** of Pretika Corporation; and **Michael Stoll** of UT Brands. In addition, **Brett Bradshaw**, president, Bradshaw International, has been elected chairman; **John Collins** of Neat-freak Group, as vice chairman/chairman-elect; and **Philippe Trudeau** of Trudeau Corporation, as treasurer.

Also serving on the IHA board are **Hildy Abrams** of Gourmet Settings; **Gregory Cairo** of Groupe SEB USA and im-

mediate past IHA chairman; **Fred Dohn** of Arc International; **William Endres** of Select Brands; **Melissa Kieling** of PackIt; **Kristine Malkoski**; **Alejandro Peña** of Keter North America; **Howard Steidle Jr.** of John Ritzenthaler; and **Will Symonds** of DKB Household USA.

In other IHA news, **Mark Adkison** has accepted the role of Vice President, International.

- Angela Corfield** is the new category manager for the H.Y. Louie Co. She replaces D. Rawson who has retired.

- Emerson has entered into a definitive agreement to sell its ClosetMaid business to Griffon Corporation, a New York-based diversified management and holding company, for \$260 million.

- The board of directors of the Canadian Gift Association has decided to cancel the Spring Edition of the Quebec Gift

Fair due to declining attendance. There will no longer be any CanGift trade shows in Quebec as they turn their focus to the Toronto and Alberta shows.

- Lifetime Brands has acquired the business and assets of Fitz and Floyd.

Founded in 1960, Fitz and Floyd designs, sources, markets and distributes Fitz and Floyd and other branded products through a range of distribution channels, such as big box retailers, department stores, specialty kitchen and gift shops and e-commerce websites.

Jeffrey Siegel, Lifetime's chairman and CEO, says "Fitz and Floyd products, including handcrafted, decoratively designed figurines and centerpieces and elegant dinnerware and serveware are recognized for their high quality and unique style."

Steven Baram, Fitz and Floyd's president and CEO, will join Lifetime's tabletop division as president of the Fitz and Floyd division.

- Target will introduce a new brand of home and lifestyle goods in partnership with **Chip and Joanna Gaines**, the former stars of HGTV's *Fixer Upper*. The line, dubbed *Hearth & Hand with Magnolia*, is one of more than a dozen exclusive brands the retailer will introduce over the next few years.

Sad ending for Sears

In early October, financially troubled Sears Canada pulled the plug on its restructuring efforts and will liquidate all of its remaining stores and assets.

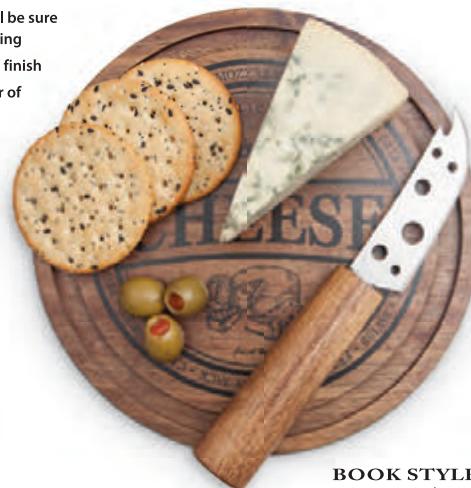
Sears Canada was granted an initial bankruptcy protection order in June while the company attempted to restructure and seek out proposals for the acquisition of or investment in the Sears Canada group of businesses, assets and leases. At that time, Sears Canada also closed 20 full-line locations as well as 15 Sears Home, 10 Sears Outlet and 14 Sears Hometown stores.

Sears Canada operates about 140 corporate stores including full-line, Sears Home and Outlet stores and 71 Hometown stores.

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Retailers In The News

An Italian eatery like no other in the world

When it opens its doors on November 15, FICO Eataly World will be unlike anything the food arena has ever seen. As part of the sprawling, 20-acre complex in Bologna, Italy, there will be 108,000 square feet of orchards, pastures, and gardens; six rides; 40 workshops; and 25 restaurants and food stalls from which to pick pizza, pasta, and polenta. Adding to the grown-up theme park vibe, there will be 500 adult-sized tricycles with shopping baskets, designed especially for the complex by celebrated Italian bike makers Bianchi.

Those pastures won't just have scrub grass and a few Jersey cows scattered here and there. According to *Bloomberg Pursuits*, you'll be able to find nine kinds of cows, five kinds of pigs, five kinds of goats, five kinds of sheep, and rabbit, geese, and guinea hens.

Visitors will be able to do everything from learning the prosciutto process to seeing wheat, stone-ground, turned into flour, and made into several kinds of pasta. Eataly World experience is also slated to get a 200-room hotel in 2018.

Officials hope the venture, which is expected to cost \$106 million, will pay off. Admission is free, but Eataly representatives say that they're anticipating six million tourists will visit the complex annually, two million of which will be foreigners.

Millennials are still shopping in stores

Millennials may be attuned to the world of e-commerce, but they have not turned their backs on brick-and-mortar retailing.

A recent survey of consumers by First Insight found that 71% of Millennials are visiting multiple stores to find the best deals on products. By comparison, only 57% of Baby Boomers are walking into more than one store to find a good deal.

But Millennials are not shunning technology as part of their shopping experience as 82% are going online to

search for deals, while 65% of Baby Boomers are shopping digitally to find the lowest price.

"The retail industry has been operating on the outdated assumption that Boomers are shopping for deals primarily in-store and Millennials are searching for deals mostly online," says Greg Petro of First Insight. "The behavior between these generations is evolving, and to benefit, retailers must recalibrate their approach to marketing, inventory and pricing to attract deal-seekers who may have been overlooked based on outdated perceptions."

Whole Foods Market saw store traffic rise by 17% the week that new owner Amazon implemented price cuts. That same week, Trader Joe's and Sprouts Farmers Market in the U.S. saw 10% and 8% of their regular shoppers head to Whole Foods, respectively, according to Thasos Group. Three percent of Target's and 2% of Costco's regular shoppers also patronized Whole Foods during the same period.



Free freight from Danica

Ziggy's at Home was the big winner of the Danica Free Freight contest held during the Toronto Gift Fair. All retail customers who placed an order at the show automatically became eligible to win free freight on all orders until Christmas!



Swissmar held a special draw to create excitement for housewares customers visiting Hall 7 at the Toronto Gift Fair last August. The lucky winner of the draw for two airline tickets to anywhere in Canada or Continental United States was Edelweiss Imports, located in Calgary. Shown above making the draw at the Swissmar offices are, left to right, Michelle Moskalyk, Marketing Manager, Daniel Oehy President, Dimitra McGinnity, Senior Sales Manager, Chris O'Neill, Product Specialist, Myriam Hill, Executive Assistant and Linda Heidman, National Sales Manager.



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**Toronto Gift Fair
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Industry News Update



Showcased at the opening night pool party at the Miami Global Forum are, l-r, Chris Shipston of Jascor, Christy Kehoe of Product Specialties, Grey Myers of Lodge, Jan Murtagh of Component Design Northwest and Laurie O'Halloran of *Home Style Magazine*.

IBC hosts international forum in Miami

The stunning new East Hotel in Miami was the site of the 2017 IBC Global Forum, presented by the International Business Council. The event, which is overseen by the International Housewares Association, brings together housewares vendors from across North America who are looking to grow their international business. Presenters during the three day forum included retail buyers from Korea, Britain (John Lewis), Latin America, Mexico and Japan who briefed attendees on how to approach their countries and the retail landscape.

Dr. Denis Leclerk of Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona delivered the keynote address, which kept attendees enthralled for over three hours. He provided an excellent overview of international negotiation strategies, offering a keen insight into intercultural communication techniques.

An opening night barbecue around the pool kicked off the meeting, while Byblos Restaurant was the site of an incredible, multi-course South Beach dinner on the second night. (Fortunately the hotel did not suffer damage from Hurricane Irma.)

At least three Canadian companies took part in the forum this year. The 2018 Global Forum is scheduled to be held in Toronto. For more information on the IHA's International Business Council, visit www.housewares.org.

James Corden shares the love with Keurig

Keurig Green Mountain and television talk show host James Corden have teamed up together to launch the coffee supplier's "Brew The Love" campaign.

According to Keurig, the goal of the new campaign is to convert current drip coffee drinkers to the company's single-serve coffeemakers. The campaign, which launched October 2nd, includes a series of television commercials, along with digital and social media advertising.

The commercials feature Corden interacting with consumers that drink coffee made from drip coffeemakers and shows them the features of Keurig's new K-Select coffeemaker.

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Vendors In The News



Zak Designs has launched a new subsidiary called Design Direct Global (DDG). It will be dedicated to incorporating the latest global fashion trends into a range of dinnerware, drinkware, and serveware products that are as stylish as they are versatile.

"DDG can provide our customers with innovative designs, materials, and new products that offer the kind of upscale feel needed to transform everyday casual dining into an individualized statement of style," says Tom Ostrom, President.

Boho, shown above, is the first collection released by DDG. Expressing a new twist on the Bohemian-inspired lifestyle, Boho is an eclectic selection of products that work equally well as an everyday collection or seasonal accent.

Fox Run celebrates 50 years

On September 19th, Fox Run Brands hosted a luncheon to celebrate the company's 50 years in business.

Fox Run originally started as a small family-owned cookie cutter manufacturer but has since grown into an international company with over 15 brand names under its umbrella. Fox Run carries over 3,000 individual SKUs and has expanded to include distribution facilities in Toronto and Shanghai.

The celebration brought employees from across the country together to the main offices in Ivyland, Pennsylvania.



Left to right: Keith Feusner, Jeana Smith, Jill Blatstein, Chris Mannion, Richard Crutchley, Laura Thayne at Fox Run's head office.



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Vendors In The News

Fiesta removes two colours from the line

Homer Laughlin China is retiring two Fiesta colours: Tangerine and Claret, to be replaced by a new colour, which will be unveiled on January 9, 2018 at the Atlanta International Gift & Home Furnishings Market.

A staple in the Fiesta color spectrum for several years, Tangerine was introduced in 2003. Claret was in production since 2016. The company will be taking orders from retailers for Tangerine and Claret until December 31, 2017, for delivery by March 1, 2018. On March 31, 2018, Tangerine and Claret will be added to the "inactive availability" list of colors.

Fiesta also released a list of discontinued items. The company has discontinued the following pieces from its collection: medium mixing bowl, beverage server, square handled tray, three-tier server, cake plate and server, and solid colour packs of its two-piece baking/prep bowl set and three-piece baking bowl set. It is also discontinuing its neutral colour set of its five-piece entertaining set.



Claret, above, and Tangerine, below, will be removed from Fiesta's colour palette to make room for a new colour in January.



Swissmar takes over Scanpan distribution

Swissmar has been appointed as the exclusive Canadian Distributor for the SCANPAN line of products.

Swissmar President Daniel Oehy says "SCANPAN products are well respected in the cookware category, recognized for quality manufacturing with a strong Scandinavian heritage and we are pleased with the opportunity to represent SCANPAN in Canada. In addition to the staple, best-selling pieces, we have added several new products to our initial assortment, with plans to add more products for January."

For over 30 years Swissmar has been providing kitchen tools, fondues and raclette grills to home cooks and food enthusiasts throughout North America.

Bradshaw buys Casabella Holdings

Bradshaw International, a manufacturer of kitchenware and home cleaning products, has purchased Casabella Holdings. Founded by Bruce Kaminstein, Casabella designs household cleaning tools and kitchen products.

According to the company, Casabella will continue to be based in the New York area. Kaminstein will join the Bradshaw management team and continue to run Casabella as its founder and managing director. Casabella will continue its commitment to its product line, focusing on quality, design and functionality, the company said.

In a joint statement, Bradshaw International co-presidents, Robert Michelson and Brett Bradshaw, said: "The Casabella brand represents a significant addition to the current portfolio of home products offered in our cleaning

division, Butler Home Products."

Kaminstein launched Casabella in 1988. The company is now a leader in the cleaning and kitchen accessories market.

Gourmet is growing fast in Las Vegas

Las Vegas Market reports that expansion in the gourmet category continues, with five new suppliers – Le Cluny, Mariposa, Natural Olivewood, Peter Pauper Press and Peterson Associates/Boelter Brands – opening and expanding showrooms for the Winter 2018 market which runs from January 28 to February 1. The number of gourmet resources topped 500 for the first time at this past Summer Market and showroom space on C11 – the dynamic new destination for gift-oriented housewares, tabletop and specialty food – is expected to be sold out early in 2018.

Visit www.lasvegasmarket.com.

Frankfurt to focus on four key trends

What is new? What will stay the same? The interior design trends of the future will be on display in a comprehensive presentation of merchandise at Ambiente Fair in Frankfurt to be held February 9 to 13, 2018.

All research and curatorial work for Ambiente Trends 2018 is being handled by bora.herke.palmisano Trend Bureau. The trend scouts have been filtering the relevant seminal influences in design, art, architecture, fashion and lifestyle to select the best products from exhibitors.

Their trend message will be seen under the terms "Fusion, Link and Connection". The focus will be on everyday things, handmade items, sustainability and being future-proof. This will be specifically reflected in four stylistic directions: Modest Regenerations, Colourful Intentions, Technological Emotions and Opulent Narrations.

The fair will offer exclusive guided tours and talks by the design studio, offering intensive glimpses of the four trend worlds. Ambiente Trends will be supported by a brochure using colour palettes, sample products and materials.

Four trend worlds for 2018:

Modest Regenerations

- Plain and simple

A trend which is both contemporary and timeless while also being plain and relaxed. The preferred materials will be wood, stone, concrete, ceramics, bamboo and cast iron as well as linen and wool, in natural colours.

Colourful Intentions

- Ethical claims and strong colours

This style stands for strong, bright colours, powerful patterns, dynamism and vitality. The mixture of materials, recycling and upcycling, are backed up

by an ethical claim so products are not just impressive, but also sustainable.

Technological Emotions

- Innovative materials/emotionally appealing Experimentation with new technologies has created an impression design that appeals to the emotions. It includes some uncommon combinations of materials – paper and linen – plus other elements that speak to the senses like super-thin films, soft textile structures and innovative visual accents.

Opulent Narrations

The courage to be opulent

This picturesque look is marked by precious oriental materials and a love for opulent details. It involves the use of artistically decorated porcelain, precious stones, ornate leatherwork, brocades, embroidery and relief carvings.

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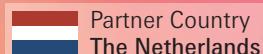


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Industry News Update

Consumers are smarter, healthier

As 2017 heads toward the fourth quarter and the all-important holiday selling season, American consumers are searching for housewares products that offer versatility and convenience, allow them to eat healthier, make it easier to cook and utilize smart technology.

"The home industry is in a growth phase for the next 5 to 10 years and it is the best growth phase since the 1970s," says Joe Derochowski, home industry analyst for The NPD Group. "In the nine weeks leading up to Christmas in 2016, no industry grew faster than housewares. It is a very hot industry and it is going to stay hot."

He adds: "The life stages with growth are now hitting key moments, such as first marriage, first home, remodeling, retirement and empty nesters. Mathematically it is impossible for the industry not to grow."

In addition, he said the demographic groups that are growing are all interested in the three main trends influencing housewares sales – healthy eating, convenience and entertaining at home.

Four of the top nine growing housewares categories in terms of sales to date in 2017 are portable beverageware, cookware, fryers and multi-functional cookers. Derochowski says categories such as portable beverageware and air fryers are experiencing growth because consumers are interested in healthier eating while categories such as multicookers are popular because consumers want products that provide versatility as well as speed and convenience.

Fueled by the trend toward healthy living, portable beverageware was the top-selling category in the first six months this year. Also highlighting the trend toward healthier eating is the Digital Nutritional Scale by Component Design Northwest (CDN), distributed by Browne. The scale, which targets health conscious consumers, displays nutritional data along with units of measure. It comes with food codes that can be entered to generate information on calories, sodium, protein, fat, carbohydrates, cholesterol and fiber, and also performs traditional scale functions. The product's features tie in with current trends, such as an increased awareness of health consequences of ingredient choices as well as the trend toward cooking more at home rather than eating out.

Convenience and versatility are key selling points for many consumers since they are interested in saving time and effort. Hamilton Beach Brands Personal Oatmeal Maker can be used to make breakfast items such as regular or steel-cut oats, cream of wheat, grits and more. It can also be used to cook rice or other grains, making it versatile to use for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

While the move toward smart home products is just starting, the trend is here to stay. According to CNBC.com, 80 million smart home devices, such as personal home assistants, smart home thermostats, smoke detectors, smart locks and video doorbells, were delivered globally in 2016, a 64% increase from the prior year. This trend is expected to continue climbing this year and is predicted to reach 130 million.

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Trend Tracking

- As Health Canada prepares to rewrite our food guide with more of a vegan slant, Belgium's new food pyramid has taken it a step further by removing processed meat altogether. Bacon and deli meats are now grouped together with candy, alcohol and fried foods.

At the top of the inverted pyramid there is a recommendation to drink plenty of water, followed by plant-based foods; fresh fruit and vegetables; legumes; tofu; grain products and nuts. In 2015, the World Health Organization officially classified red meat as "probably carcinogenic to humans" and processed meat as "carcinogenic to humans".

- From Le Creuset's pink hibiscus collection to Starbuck's unicorn frappuccino, pink has become the colour of money when it comes to consumer marketing.

Since food is fashion and fashion is food, the hue really caught on after Pantone named Dusty Rose as its colour of

the year for 2016. But it was already catching on with millennials and one of the drivers in terms of consumption was the transformation of Rosé wine from a tacky forgotten 'afternoon' wine to a mark of affordable sophistication.

The colour itself has come to take on the qualities most people associate with Rosé wine such as free-spiritedness, casual luxury, youth and popularity. These are precisely the qualities most brands strive for with millennial consumers. It also has an androgynous appeal in the fashion industry with male celebrities now wearing pink regularly.

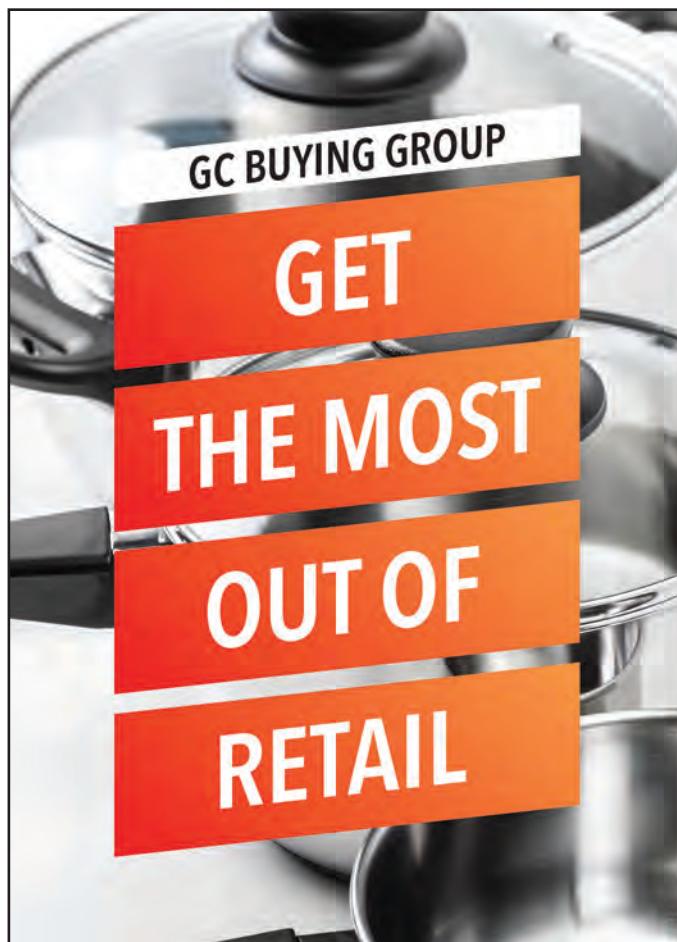
But like all good things, pink won't last forever. What colour will be next? Most analysts are predicting it will be purple.

- Better Homes & Gardens latest Food Factor Study shows that 79% of women typically eat dinner at home five nights a week. The survey found that 80% of women say cooking is an important part

of family traditions and 74% say it's a critical part of how they entertain. Specifically, the study found that over two thirds of American women see cooking as a creative outlet.

- Wayfare lists upwards of 8 million products and will book about \$4 billion in sales of furniture and other home goods this year, but bargain prices, free delivery on big-ticket items and investments in overseas markets have kept the Boston-based e-commerce company in the red. As a result, the company is moving logistics in-house to cut costs and improve service quality.

- Amazon is gearing up to launch its Prime Now one- and two-hour delivery service here in Canada. It will debut it in Vancouver in November and Toronto early next year. Amazon's acquisition of Whole Foods Market gives it 13 brick-and-mortar stores in Canada.



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ON THE MENU

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CREATED BY CHEF RICARDO

hamburger steak with broccoli and pea mash

PREPARATION 25 minutes
COOKING 30 minutes
SERVINGS 4

Hamburger Steak

2 cups (500 ml) beef broth
2 tbsp dark toasted flour (see note)
1/2 tsp crushed black peppercorns
1 1/2 lb (675 g) lean ground beef
2 tbsp butter
1 onion, thinly sliced
1/2 cup (125 ml) Marsala wine

Broccoli and Pea Mash

1 broccoli, cut into small florets
1 cup (150 g) frozen peas
1 tbsp butter

Hamburger Steak

- 1 In a bowl, whisk together the broth, toasted flour and pepper until smooth. Set aside.
- 2 Shape the ground beef into 8 patties.
- 3 In a large skillet over high heat, brown half of the patties at a time in the butter. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside on a plate.
- 4 In the same skillet over medium-high heat, brown the onion. Deglaze with the Marsala and reduce until almost dry. Add the reserved broth mixture and bring to a boil. Boil for 5 minutes or until the sauce has thickened. Return the patties to the skillet and continue cooking for 2 minutes or until cooked through.

Broccoli and Pea Mash

- 5 In the meantime, in a pot of salted boiling water, cook the broccoli until tender. Add the peas and cook for 1 minute. Drain.
- 6 In a food processor, purée half of the vegetables with the butter. Add the remaining vegetables and pulse until coarsely chopped. Season with salt and pepper, and spoon onto the patties.
- 7 Serve with boiled or mashed potatoes and drizzle with the sauce.

| NOTE | Toasted flour is available in some grocery stores. Otherwise, toast your own in a dry skillet over medium heat, stirring frequently, until golden brown.

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Plan for tomorrow today

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

Finding and retaining top talent has always plagued the retail industry. As the first set of baby boomers turned 70 this past year, small and medium-sized businesses are going to be challenged with a mass exodus of retirees within the next 5-10 years. The need to develop and foster new leaders in the retail sector has never been more evident. Having gone through a management buyout myself, I can attest firsthand to the years of planning that a smooth and comfortable transition will require for all stakeholders.

According to a recent TD Waterhouse poll, only 24% of some 609 small business owners surveyed in Canada have a succession plan in place. Shockingly, an equal number of respondents said they would simply close their doors when they were ready for retirement; while 20% hope to sell to a third party, 18% planned to transfer to a family member; 12% plan to sell to a key employee, and 27% aren't sure what they will do.

While the baby boomer generation will leave voids of experience in several industries, the transition within the Canadian independent retail sector is particularly fragile at the moment.

While the inventory of business-for-sale is on the rise, poor planning can lead to disappointment and/or failure for the future generation. A critical key in any succession planning is finding a suitable successor who understands your company culture; what is the core vision that has led to your success? This is often why individuals who have had the opportunity to learn and grow within a business are often the most qualified in understanding the future needs.

On the flip side, the candidate needs to be willing to make the necessary

changes that will help the business grow. Much like a tree needs roots for continuous nourishment; it is its ability to generate new roots as the tree matures that will make it thrive in conditions that would normally wipe out less hardy species. Retail is a dynamic industry and the continuous regeneration of new "roots" is essential to a company's long term health.

It may seem counterintuitive for an owner to start planning his/her exit strategy while business is thriving; however, this is the time that the valuation is at its peak. An integral part of the planning process is to determine what the business is actually worth. Both buyer and seller, regardless of the transition type, will want to ensure they are getting the maximum value of the sale.

Third party valuations are a worthwhile investment every few years as a means to ensure that you know the worth of your business compared to the marketplace. Most owners have spent a good portion of their lives building their business, along with countless hours and restless nights ensuring that it continues to prosper. It is quite difficult to put a value on one's life work. A proper valuation needs to be objective and will serve as a roadmap of the changing demands and skillset within a company. A succession plan should be used as a benchmark to assess how healthy an organization is if its main leader(s) were to step aside, whatever the reason.

The most common types of succession are either a management buyout or a third party sell, but both scenarios present different complexities to a comfortable exit. Most often, managers or suitable successors within a company are lacking in the capital investment re-



quired to buy a business. Vendor take backs are quite common but can be challenging since you are still financially (and emotionally) tied to the future success of the business.

Selling to a third party may bring the financial reward but you risk negatively affecting employee morale and the values that you have built.

Amalgamations or mergers are becoming increasingly popular in several industries. Most often, smaller companies are bought by larger corporations in order to gain or strengthen market share. The buyers are generally already familiar within the industry and the acquisition of a competitor can enhance the profile and market share. Financing is typically a non-issue in this scenario but smart investors will want to invest their money wisely.

Whatever the case may be, if you are even remotely close to considering retirement, pro-actively planning the transition of your company could be the most important business decision you will ever make. Delaying it could end up costing you both money and your legacy. ☺

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The living kitchen

How technology has quickly become part of the "fabric" of our homes

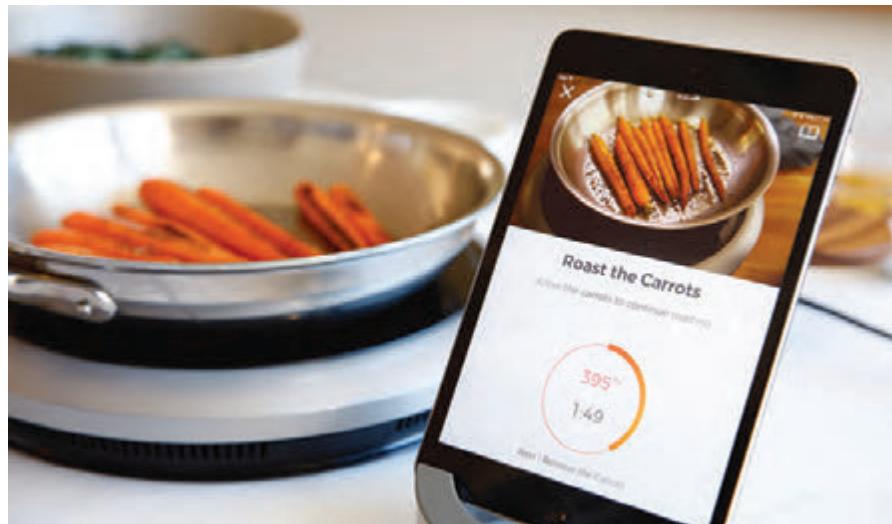
By Ashley Daigneault and Michael Wolf

In 2015, Swedish furniture giant IKEA released a video that outlined their vision for what the kitchen of the future might look like. The IKEA 2025 Concept Kitchen looked like something out of the futuristic movie *Minority Report*, where machine vision, built-in sensors and artificial intelligence (AI) combined to make surfaces come alive with information for the consumer to learn, communicate and manage their kitchen.

IKEA's vision was somewhat reminiscent of Microsoft's Home of the Future 10 years earlier, where the software giant envisioned a kitchen that utilized AI to let you know what food you had on hand, suggested recipes based on that food and walked you through the cooking process via projected recipes on your countertop. Even before that, companies like General Motors were creating videos about the future of the kitchen stretching back to the 1950s.

What do these different takes on the kitchen of the future have in common? The unifying theme that ties them together is the vision of a kitchen alive with technology, where appliances, kitchen surfaces and cooking tools all work together to make life easier for the consumer.

Just how close are we to that vision? Probably not as far as you think. With advances in data, machine learning, virtual reality and artificial intelligence changing the way we shop, store, cook and eat our food, we are witnessing a shift toward a more living kitchen.



Smart Surfaces Are Coming

One clear goal of those endeavoring to create the future of the kitchen is to make kitchen surfaces more intelligent. What were once-futuristic visions of intuitive living spaces are now appearing at trade shows and in concept demos.

In 2014, Whirlpool showed off intelligent cooking surfaces similar to IKEA's vision, and a year later a German company talked about its VUX projection interface. Other companies are working to make our surfaces adapt to the needs of a home's inhabitants. Germany's Tielsa has created a cabinet and kitchen counter system that dynamically adjusts their height to match the user's.

New Interfaces Leading the Way

Amazon's play to be the brains of our connected home starts with the AI-powered Amazon Echo. The smart Bluetooth

speaker, often found sitting on a countertop, has brought voice control and AI into our homes. Ask Alexa for the news or weather and then ask her what's for dinner based on a number of recipe skills that will help you get the meal on the table. And recipe skills are just the beginning. More and more appliance manufacturers and housewares brands are looking at the Echo as a way to add connectivity in the kitchen. GE and Whirlpool both allow Alexa to control their appliances. Whether it's turning on the oven, checking the icemaker or checking to see if the laundry is done, technology is slowly creeping into our everyday tasks.

Alexa will also create a shopping list for you and allow you to order things from Amazon with your voice. And Echo isn't the only device Amazon is putting in consumer homes to try to en-

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courage more buying from the online retailer. The Amazon Dash division recently announced it has created over 250 brand buttons to allow for quick, one-touch ordering to be placed throughout your home.

Consumer adoption of smart home technology may have been slow over the past five years, but is accelerating with platforms like Echo and Nest bringing it to the mass market. Amazon may have been first to bring voice control to the space but Google and Apple are also looking at voice-powered AI as an entrant to being the operating system for every consumer home.

New Tools, Better Food

2016 saw the introduction of many kitchen gadgets and platforms designed to not just make cooking easier, but to make cooking better food easier. The resurgence of sous vide, a French technique that cooks food slowly in a water bath, is being led by companies like Anova and ChefSteps with entry-level connected machines to make the technique easy. But beyond simple gadgets for single recipes, a new category of cookware is emerging that both cooks your food and automates certain processes along the way. Deemed the guided cooking category, startups like Cuciniale and Hestan Cue are making induction burners with connectivity built-in and companion apps that can automate things like temperature control to ensure a perfect meal without removing the actual joy of cooking from the process.

The Appliances of the Future

And what about the mainstays in the kitchen – ovens, stoves, refrigerators? There's been little in the way of technological innovation in appliances since the introduction of the microwave by Amana in 1967. But new breakthroughs in IoT and data platforms are allowing companies to rethink what appliances do to help us store and prep the food we eat. One of the major trends in the appliance space is countertop-based devices. Panasonic's countertop induction oven and the new June smart oven, along with new devices promised this year, illustrate a move to create more modular solutions with better heating technology for the kitchen.

The June oven is much more than just a countertop device; it includes cameras, sensors and machine-learning software that take the guesswork out of baking and roasting. Where the pitch for smart home tech is to make life more convenient, the value proposition for smart kitchen devices like June is their ability to help us do things better. Americans want to eat healthy and at home more often, but if cooking at home could be easier and taste better, our kitchens might start to look a little different.

If Innit has anything to do with it, the appliances of the future will be much smarter. The intelligent food platform is a big data engine that knows everything about our food and can source and identify it without user input. Through partnerships with appliance giant Whirlpool and consumer magazine *Good Housekeeping*, Innit plans to inte-

grate with appliances so the fridge knows what's inside and can suggest recipes to prepare. Add in a robot butler, and you might not have to lift a finger.

Will Robots Take Over?

It's obvious that this technical revolution in our kitchens and our homes is driven largely by Big Data. Every device is capturing huge amounts of information about us: what we eat, how we live, when we're home and what we like to buy and consume. Many wonder what will become of all that data; it is inevitable that the connectivity in our homes will lend itself to new marketing opportunities for companies trying to sell us stuff. Privacy around how key data is going to be capitalized on is an important discussion topic.

But what about cyber intruders? Connecting all our "stuff" to the internet comes with an inherent risk of hacking, although you're still more likely to have someone throw a brick through your window.

And finally, if everything is online and our fridge, oven and shopping list are all reliant on connectivity and the cloud to function, how do power interruptions or Wi-Fi reliability interrupt our daily lives? We've seen examples of the backlash of this during events like the Nest thermostat outage – and that's just one device. If we're relying on automation and machine learning to help us buy, cook and consume our food, we need it to be reliable.

None of these concerns are enough to warrant a panic – or to shy away from what will inevitably be innovations that will hit the marketplace. But what does the kitchen of the Home of the Future look like in 10 years? It's likely to have some delicious food – and a few robots to boot. ~

Reprinted with permission from *Smart Home Magazine*. Smart Home will be a key theme again next year at the 2018 International Home + Housewares Show, taking place in Chicago from March 10th to 13th. Visit www.housewares.org for more information.

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Soaring to lofty heights

Michelle Hespe speaks to Mr. Satoru Iimura, Executive Director of Loft, a chain of retail stores in Japan that became one of the five Global Honourees at this year's IHA Global Innovation Awards at Chicago's International Home + Housewares Show

Loft is celebrating more than its *gia* win in Chicago this year. "2017 marks 30 years since the first Loft store opened in Shibuya, Tokyo, so entering *gia* became a significant opportunity for us to review everything by going back to where we started, and in doing so, make a new start on our birthday," says Mr. Iimura, who is in charge of merchandising, business planning and new business development at Loft. "Thanks to *gia*, we were motivated to explore our global standpoint and our future goals."

Loft's first store sold lifestyle accessories in Shibuya's Seibu department store. Since then, Loft has constantly evolved yet remained true to its core purpose and philosophy of being a 'con-

tainer of the times', adjusting to changes of each period and era, and thus meeting needs of urban people by providing new styles and tools in lifestyle products.

"Being market-oriented, we don't force the logic of our manufacturers or suppliers on to our consumers. Instead, we collect and select merchandise with a consumers' logic in mind, and operate our business on behalf of consumers," says Iimura.

In 1996, Loft was incorporated as The Loft Company, and after the company introduced its innovative unit item inventory control system, it increased the number of stores rapidly. Now Loft has 110 stores in Japan, and to add to the many reasons to celebrate, soon Loft is

expected to achieve its mid-term plan of reaching 100 billion yen turnover.

"In 1996, Loft began to adopt its multi-store operation strategy, which would essentially serve an increasing number of customers," explains Iimura. "While doing this, we strengthened our merchandising proposal of always offering new, great things, to ensure that our current customers remained loyal and that more people were attracted to Loft."

But of course, it's not all about the products. "We strive to present not only unique products, but services that can only be found in Loft," says Iimura, explaining that his team adopts the 'Loft WAY' strategy to inspire customers on how to embrace and live the store's philosophy, and 'Loft NEXT' is the idea of change being explored and exploited in the company's online strategy, through its omni channels providing a fusion of e-commerce.

This focus on taking advantage of new technology has kept Loft at the top of its game. "There have been drastic changes in the Japanese retailing industry during the last decade, such as the entry and immediate expansion of discount stores," explains Iimura. "In the miscellaneous accessory product category ('zakka' in Japanese), many companies from different industries such as fashion, joined the zakka market and further heated the competition. As well, the rapid growth of e-commerce massively influenced the retailing industry,



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decreasing sales in traditional stores."

As these shifts occurred, Loft continually analyzed its inventory data, updated and adopted new IT systems, and unified the management for ordering, buying, logistics, and sales with a unit control system. This system identifies items that sell well or poorly, giving management the chance to follow the changing tastes of Loft customers.

In addition, the team at Loft organizes and proposes new merchandise groups with new themes on a quarterly basis, while privately developing in-house products in order to maintain a strong point of differentiation.

Loft has also adopted new technologies such as a 3D computer system to develop customized products and services, and a mobile application membership was created in order to analyze sales, shopping behaviors and customer profiles. To complement this, events were launched where SNS (Social Network Site) influencers are invited along, as part of the synergic sales promotional activities, online and in real stores.

Amidst all of these technological de-

velopments, Iimura and his team are acutely aware that they need to stay in touch with some of the more traditional elements of retailing — such as good old-fashioned service with a smile.

"As technology advances, I feel that many channels are becoming more entangled and complicated," says Iimura. "As this happens, the values of consumers tend to be further subdivided. In order to respond to consumers' intentions, retailers should adapt to technological novelties, but at the same time, this give us all an opportunity to review our history, and traditional things and approaches. This means we can still experience and touch the good analogue elements of retail."

Taking care of their staff is also a crucial element of Loft's business plan, and they like to give their staff a solid sense of job security. "By sustaining the company's growth and prosperity, we give our employees good working conditions, thorough training in all departments, and their employment is guaranteed until the age of 65, so that they can enjoy cultural lifestyles," says Iimura.

The chain uses 260 Visual Merchandising Leaders to maintain the cutting edge look of the 110 stores.

Loft managers take the look and feel of their stores very seriously, and testimony to this is the fact that by November 2016, there were 260 Visual Merchandising leaders working across the stores. Those leaders work closely with the marketing division of the head office to ensure campaigns and ideas are consistent across Japan.

The appearance of the stores and products at Loft is a special element of the business. In keeping with this, Loft has a range of cleverly themed zones for customers to be inspired by. The spaces were brought to life by the MIKAN architectural firm in Japan, famous for creating amazing modern, light-filled spaces, whether they be houses, nurseries, schools, commercial facilities or an expo pavilion.

For instance, '& HOME' floors in Shibuya Loft store are organized into 'Eating' on the 3rd floor and 'Renova-



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Global Honouree



Loft creates a variety of cleverly-themed zones that are brought to life by MIKAN, a top architectural firm known for its amazing use of modern, light-filled spaces.

tion' for the 4th floor. To complement the products, towers of carefully chosen books related to the themes are placed on sales floors so that customers can deepen their knowledge of products and their interest. There's the 'Cook & Dine' sales floor where different eating styles are introduced, such as 'Café Style' and 'Bento (lunchbox) Style'. All zones are entertainment spaces, with themes such as 'cooking', 'eating', 'tasting' and 'learning' flowing from one to another like the pages in a book or a magazine.

With so many new things going on in such a well-orchestrated manner, it's no surprise that the **gia** judges were highly impressed by Loft. The imagination, innovation, technology business acumen that has been funneled into the 30 year-old business speaks for itself.

The jury agreed that Loft is: "A store that invites people to explore and try new things. The great floorplans and use of space, with beautiful lighting, add a sense of theater and entertainment, which draws customers back again and again."

The judges also thought that a focus on attracting bloggers and influencers has greatly benefitted the Loft brand, because word of mouth is some of the best possible advertising.

"We really enjoyed the supreme, honorable moment when our company was selected by the judges and jury as a **gia** Global Honouree," says Iimura. "When it was announced at the gala dinner, we were lost in happiness and excitement. The atmosphere of the whole ballroom was heated with high-voltage energy. Then we enjoyed friendly conversations with the distinguished judges, as well as with other winners. We all shared those joyous moments, and all of them are now unforgettable memories." ~

To see more on Loft, visit www.loft.co.jp. For more information about the **gia** (IHA Global Innovation Awards) program, contact Piritta Törrö at piritta.torro@inspired-connection.fi. Additional information on the **gia** program is also available online at www.housewares.org/show/gia-retail.



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PHILIPS

Cocktail Hour

What's new in wine accessories and barware



Counseltron's *My Crystal* undershelf wine glass holder by Metaltex allows users to store and hang 16 wine glasses at a time. The sleek polytherm coating and useful cabinet stemware rack makes it a convenient and practical addition to your kitchen. Made in Italy.

The VacuVin swirling carafe from **Intercontinental Mercantile**, right, is now made from handmade crystal, not machine-made glass. With a gentle push, the cork bottom will turn and roll, allowing the wine to breathe. Also new is the Moscow Mule hammered ice bucket, below. It can hold up to 2.7 litres and is made in India of copper plated stainless steel.



Product Specialties has introduced the Final Touch 5-piece bar tool set, shown below. The elegant set is made of copper-plated 304 Grade stainless steel with wood accents on the handles. It includes a Hawthorne strainer, double jigger, bottle opener, spoon and stand with a marble base. The set stands 11 inches high and makes the perfect gift for the home bar. To clean, hand wash only.



The Elis Touch electric corkscrew from **Peugeot** can remove any type of cork from a wine bottle quickly and quietly. Just place the corkscrew over the neck of the bottle and press down until the cork is extracted. To release, simply press the eject button. It can be easily recharged by placing on the charging base and can uncork 40 bottles with just one charge.

MAKE A **SMART** MOVE

The IHA Show in Chicago is by far the most exciting and valuable trade event of my calendar year. Without fail, it delivers innovation, excitement and a freshness that other shows can only aspire to.

Clearly delineated category areas and great transport links make for really easy navigation – mean I can concentrate on the important stuff, finding the gems. Quality suppliers, informative and relevant initiatives such as the Keynote speeches, Pantone Color Watch booth, New Product Showcases and Inventors Corner all make it an essential part of my annual sourcing calendar. There's lots to love about this show!

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Cocktail Hour



The new Govino whiskey glass from **Cuisivin**, right, is made of BPA-free polymer resin. The 14-ounce ergonomic glass is shatter-proof with a substantial base and the patented thumb notch. Also new from Cuisivin is the Bouquet Decanter, left. This unique conversation piece gives new meaning to those who believe in a glass of wine a day! The pedestal base vaults the wine up allowing for a wonderful presentation of the colour and clarity. The wide bowl allows for quick aeration while the diminutive spout provides convenient pouring.



This set of expandable wine stoppers by OXO Good Grips automatically expands for an air-tight fit with a simple push. The close fitting silicone seal lets users store wine bottles on their sides without dripping. Also new from OXO is the Steel winged corkscrew, below. It removes corks of all sizes with a self-centering screw that aligns effortlessly and is non-stick. The removable foil cutter snaps into the base for convenient storage. From **Danesco**.



David Shaw Designs is unveiling a wide range of cocktail items this fall. The Cookut 'Beerd' bottle opener, shown right, is fun and easy to use. Available in an eye-catching countertop display unit, it makes an ideal impulse purchase at checkout. Also new is this set of six cocktail recipe measuring stirrers, below. Each stirrer has a recipe printed right on it: Cuba Libre, Margarita, Pina Colada, Sex on the Beach, Tequila Sunrise and White Russian. They work in any size glass.



This convenient Ice Sphere Mould from **Ricardo** makes four oversized ice spheres to keep drinks cold longer without watering down. If desired, users can add pieces of lime/lemon or any small fruits or herbs to flavour beverages and enhance the presentation of any cocktails.

Cocktail Hour

Canadian wine drinkers think pink!

Canadians spent \$22.1 billion on alcohol last year. And though much of that was spent on beer, rosé wine has become the fastest growing segment in the wine category. Consumers in Canada purchased 21.2 million bottles of rosé in 2016, about four million more than they bought in 2011. The 7.4% growth in rosé sales easily outpaced Canada's 4.1% increase in overall wine consumption.

At Liquor Control Board of Ontario stores, sales of rosé with the Vintners Quality Alliance seal grew 47% over the past 12 months compared to the previous year. Colio's Girls Night Out brand is the LCBO's best-selling rosé with sales up 35% over last year!

The insulated Portable Wine Carrier from **WildEye Designs** (shown in gold) keeps white wine chilled and red wine fresh. It comes with two 16-ounce cups. Hand washing is recommended.



WildEye is also launching the Wine Carrier Purse, pictured above in Black Croc. it can hold two standard size bottles of wine for easy transport to picnics or dinner parties.



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Cocktail Hour



Abbott will be introducing several barware items for the holiday season. Shown left, the Explorer classic anchor bottle opener is five inches long and made of solid brass. Shown below is the Acme divided bottle caddy with built-in bottle opener on the side. It's made of galvanized metal and can hold six bottles.



The iSi Soda Maker Classic is back. Consumers can enjoy soda water the traditional way with this high quality stainless steel unit with a classic retro design. The bottle is made from PEN while the mesh casing and all the operating elements are made from stainless steel. The retro charger holder is made from durable plastic. A pressure control valve ensures maximum safety during use. The riser tube has an integrated nozzle that provides maximum comfort. Distributed in Canada by **Jascoor Housewares**, the iSi Classic comes with a two year warranty.

Ventures International offers two unique citrus products for the home bartender from Norpro. The retro-inspired citrus juicer, below, offers maximum juicing with minimal effort. Holes allow juice to strain through while holding back the pulp and seeds. It will also work with tangerines and small oranges. The two-in-one design is easy to use, easy to store and eliminates kitchen clutter. The lemon-lime wedge squeezer, right, prevents sticky finger mess. The patented whimsical heart shapes allow you to pick up the wedge with the front end to get every drop. Perfect for fresh lemonade, it is also dishwasher-safe.



A collage of various colorful kitchen items including a stack of plates, a whisk, a teapot, glasses, a toaster, and cutlery.

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The Laundry Room



The new 2-in-1 Steam N' Press from **T-fal** combines efficiency and convenience in one hand-held unit. It's ideal for travellers and perfect for quick touch-ups. Thanks to its heated soleplate and three adjustable temperature settings that adapt to any kind of fabric, users get the benefits of an iron with the convenience of a handheld steamer.



Counseltron's new "Tempest" Laundry Dryer by Metaltex, left, is a convenient folding winged laundry dryer that includes a practical laundry bag. Once the bag is loaded, it can be hung onto one of the folding wings, for an easy-reach access, without the need of bending down. The dryer also has two wheels for moving.

Engineered with a titanium-infused ceramic soleplate and 400 steam holes, the CHI Electronic Iron from **Hamilton Beach** can withstand scratches, heats up quickly and provides an extra-smooth glide. It features an illuminated, digital temperature control, adjustable steam and comfortable handle. The electronic temperature control doubles as the water tank access door. The 8-foot cord is retractable.

The Flint compact, retractable lint roller from **Danesco** is now available in six cool metallic colours. Small enough for the drawer or purse, each roller has 30 multi-use sheets of high quality adhesive. Refills sold separately.



The CHI Easy Steam smooths clothes in less than two minutes with powerful steam. This innovative steamer eliminates the work of a traditional hand-held unit thanks to the breathable, fabric garment bag. Simply hang from a convenient spot, fill-up the easy to access water cup in the base of the bag, place one item on the built-in hook and zip up the bag. With one tap of the button, the steaming begins.

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Cleaning Up

These durable Swedish Dish Cloths from **Jogi's Imports** are available in a range of bright colours and bold patterns. Known around the world for their exceptional cleaning ability, the cloths are sold in assorted 3-packs with belly-band packaging and a j-hook for hanging.



The Norpro Hedgehog silicone dish and vegetable brush from **Ventures International**, above, is an adorable addition to any kitchen. The double-sided brush won't harbor bacteria and offers long lasting



durability. The microfiber wash sponge, above, that is double sided and flexible enough to reach inside the curves and forms of wine glasses. Made from environmentally-friendly materials. Also from Ventures this fall is the unique Norpro mini dish drying mat, left. It holds 4x its weight in water and dries faster than ordinary dish cloths.



Jascor Housewares has introduced an on-trend colour to its line of cleaning products. Hot off the Pantone 2017 report, Pink Yarrow will make cleaning much more fun! Jascor is also promoting the ta da over-sink drying mat, below. Made with FDA-approved silicone, the sturdy wave mat rolls up to put away when not in use.



The Wet-It! line of cloths from **David Shaw** are made in Sweden of thick, high grade cotton fibre that will absorb 16x its weight in liquid. The colourfast prints resist fading.



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Store It!



The Pantry Collection from **David Shaw** was created to bring organization and functionality to the kitchen. Shown left, the collection uses metal, wood and glass elements paired with neutral, understated tones for timeless versatility. The practical, coordinated embossed metal storage containers are designed for kitchen and laundry products. The Pantry line also includes these charming vegetable storage sacks.

Made of natural jute and cotton they are perfect to store root vegetables such as onions and potatoes.



Counseltron's "Basel" Rolling Cart by Metaltex comes with removable drawers. It has an essential and modern design and a useful upper tray for extra storage. On the bottom it has four wheels for easy movement.



The stainless steel Titan by Joseph Joseph is no ordinary waste unit. This innovative, at-home waste bin solution has a patented, hygienic compacting system that allows it to hold up to three times more trash than a normal container. Compacting trash means users empty the container less often and require fewer liners. Titan also features an anti-tear design that won't stretch or pinch the liner and a replaceable odour filter. This free-standing compacter is available in Canada from **Danesco**.

HomeStyle

2018

EDITORIAL CALENDAR & ADVERTISING DEADLINES

January/February

Editorial Submissions due: Dec. 8, 2017

Advertising Material due: Dec. 15, 2017

- Kitchen Gadgets, Tools and Utensils
- Knives, Knife Holders and Sharpeners
- Bakeware and Decorating Accessories
- **Toronto Gift Fair Preview**
- **Las Vegas Show Preview**

March/April

Editorial Submissions due: Feb. 2, 2018

Advertising Material due: Feb. 15, 2018

- Motor-driven Appliances: Blenders, Mixers, Food Processors, Juicers, Slicers & Choppers
- Stovetop Cookware
- Home Fragrance/Candles/ Aromatherapy
- Home Entertaining - Barware/Wine Accessories
- **International Home + Housewares Show Preview**



May/June

THE BEVERAGE ISSUE

Editorial Submissions due: April 20, 2018

Advertising Material due: May 3, 2018

- Focus on Coffeemakers and Espresso Machines
- What's new in Kettles and Tea Makers
- Glass Drinkware and Stemware
- Soda Machines, Water Filtration, Water Bottles & Accessories

July/August

Editorial Submissions due: June 29, 2018

Advertising Material due: July 12, 2018

- Pepper Mills & Spice Grinders
- Casual Dinnerware
- Food Storage Containers
- **Toronto Gift Fair Preview**
- **Las Vegas Show Preview**



October/November

FALL TRENDS ISSUE

Editorial Submissions due: Sept. 28, 2018

Advertising Material due: Oct. 11, 2018

- What's new in Countertop Cooking: Toasters, Deep Fryers, Slow Cookers, Ovens & Grills
- 2018 Food, Cooking, Colour and Design Trends
- Profiling the leading housewares influencers across Canada.
- Special report on etailing on what's new in online retailing.
- 2019 Housewares Industry Forecast.



In addition to our regular categories, *Home Style* will debut a new product section in 2018. Called IMPULSE BUYS it will feature up-to-the-minute reviews of the hottest new housewares just as they hit the market.

For more information and to book your space
contact Laurie O'Halloran at laurie@homestylemag.ca or call 905-338-0799

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The true cost of a wage hike

Provincial governments in Ontario, Alberta and B.C. plan to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2019. *Home Style* asked housewares retailers how the increase will affect them.

- The minimum wage hike will cost me over \$100,000 in additional costs. Specifically, I have some junior workers and students in the warehouse and store. Those under the \$14 hourly rate will immediately receive an increase. However, those people already over that amount – but within say \$2 or \$3 an hour – will also expect to receive an increase. So it is not only those under the amount which will cause a cost increase. And on top of the wage increase you have CPP, EI, EHT, vacation, and WSIB costs.

It is not necessary to increase a high school kid's wage. They are not fending for themselves or running a household. Those folks in the Greater Toronto Area who are having trouble getting by should have been helped through tax policy changes, rather than making business pay for the vote grab.

Those in the other parts of the province where the cost of housing is lower are being dragged along with the GTA business owners for no reason. A simple tax policy shift would have left more money in their pocket, avoiding the inflation and the obvious loss of jobs.

We will be trimming positions and scaling back our benefits program to attempt to recoup the additional costs. Franchises like Tim Hortons can raise the cost of coffee, yet retailers who compete nationally and cross boarder do not have the luxury of raising prices. We must find a cost reduction somewhere. Overall, a real mess brought on by politics, rather than good policy making.

Fred Pritchard, Golda's Kitchen

- The increase will force me to reduce my overall labour costs by laying people off. And although it will give people more disposable income, prices will increase so it may be a wash in the end. Yet small business owners will suffer

with the additional cost. It could drive many to shut down because there is little profit left at the end of the day.

I think it should be implemented over a five-year plan.

Bradley Rothblott, BINZ

- The increase in the minimum wage will certainly have a negative impact on the profitability of our store. The biggest impact will be felt in the hiring of young, less experienced individuals and students. These groups often have little or no experience, and require extensive amounts of training.

Current employees will also expect a pay increase to adjust for the new minimum wage. In a very competitive market place with increasingly tight margins the effect will be inflationary.

I strongly believe that there should be different levels of pay grade for different levels of employees. Students should be placed in their own category, with part-timers vs full-timers.

Another aspect that is not being recognized is the fact that not every region of the province experiences the same high cost of living. The GTA is a very expensive place to live but it's not representative of the whole province. A more gradual approach to the increases might have been a little easier to manage.

Richard Koskineni, The Kitchen Nook

- Although most of my full time team members already make \$13 or more, my part-time team members don't. Because my sales can fluctuate considerably, I need my PT team members to fill in the gaps on days that are busier than others, covering vacation time/requests for days off or seasonal sales increases.

After a quick analysis, I figured that if sales stay the same and nothing else changes, it will decrease my profit

\$50,000 based on my current work force. In order to balance out sales to profit, I would have to decrease the amount of hours for each full-time team member and make them part-time. I would also have to hire more PT team members to ensure I still have the required coverage. My entire work team would be PT. And that doesn't take into consideration whether my senior team members should now also get bumped in salary based on their seniority/knowledge.

This analysis doesn't take into account three-week vacations or paid sick days, which require more PT team members to cover the shifts.

I don't believe PT team members should get treated the same as FT. Most are students simply making some extra money and most still live at home. And when you are only here one or two days a week, there is no way to retain information, obtain product knowledge or know all that needs to be done in a day.

The government should have consulted with all businesses and got to know all small businesses. My company can't function being run as a government business. The store is very much a 'stopover' before team members decide "what they are doing with their lives". Very few see this as their career.

Name withheld by request

- This hike will not affect me too much as I'm in the fortunate position that I can pay my team well. However, the impact this will have on the farming community and restaurant businesses (to name just two sectors) is huge. And it will affect many retailers who rely heavily on part-time staff, often students.

This increase is too much – too fast. It should be rolled out over a much longer timeline.

Jill Wilcox, Jill's Kitchen



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