

HOMEWORLD[®]

B U S I N E S S

VOLUME 32 NO. 6 APRIL 6, 2020

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“We want people to fall in love with cooking and sharing great meals together at home.”

—Bobby Griggs,
Heritage Steel
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Cook & Bake

Divided pan options picking up market momentum. **Page 24**

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Best Accessory Group rolls out Westinghouse personal care line.

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CORONAVIRUS REPORT

Reloading Housewares Supply Chain Awaits Orders

By PETER GIANNETTI
Editor-in-Chief

NEW YORK— Concerns among U.S. housewares suppliers and retailers about supply chain disruption out of China after the initial coronavirus outbreak have been surpassed by more urgent concerns closer to home about public health and safety and economic wellbeing.

Housewares vendors, nonetheless, report Chinese factories continue to wind up production capacity, despite lagging orders and expected shipping delays. This, many expect, could mitigate the threat of widespread, long-lasting inventory shortages for a housewares business that could be a key contributor when U.S. retail business resumes full-scale operations and the marketplace begins its recovery.

“We are encouraged by the recovery in China on our supply chain,” said Robert O'Donnell, vp/supply chain for H2 Brands Group, which markets Comfort Zone home comfort appliances. “Most factories

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2020 Casual Dining Report

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Casual dining set from LumiSource.

Casual Dining In Fashion With Younger Consumers

BY MIKE DUFF
Executive Editor

NEW YORK— Casual dining has become more than a temporary alternative to traditional furniture for the meal occasion, and may be replacing it in many cases as furniture in the segment suits the lifestyle-oriented interior design preferences of a large, younger slice of the consuming public.

The reasons are several. For one thing, younger consumers have come

of age in small spaces that prompted them to become function oriented in their furnishings even as they developed a more critical sense of home fashion. A lifestyle preference for focusing leisure and social activities in the home helped drive those tendencies as did a greater access to design media, whether magazines, topical television shows or online content. This is, as one industry source has observed, the Pinterest generation and it

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Tom Schnitzer, general manager of Wayfair's housewares and more operation, discusses Wayfair's recipe for success and how supplier partnerships are key to its strategic growth initiatives.

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We Go Above & Beyond



Wayfair aims to grow its housewares assortment online and in-store and learn from critical market trends.

Wayfair Recipe For Success Invites Supplier Partnerships

By MIKE DUFF
Executive Editor

BOSTON— The cancellation of the Inspired Home Show was something Wayfair took in stride, but for Tom Schnitzer, general manager of the company's housewares and more operation, and Chrissie Puchta, its director of category management, the situation was an unfortunate, if temporary, disruption as

they work to further build the company's relationships with vendors producing the range of products from electrics to tableware the company has accentuated.

Schnitzer said in the run up to the Inspired Home Show, and before its cancellation, that he looked forward to the opportunity the event provided for personal contact with the attending vendors and the chance to help them focus on ways to get the most of their

partnership with the retailer.

In addition, the show cancellation forestalled an opportunity that housewares markets afford: to learn more about critical trends in the market. Still, the company already is working to get past the problems related to the show cancellation not only through personal contacts but its own supplier events.

Schnitzer has been on the trade show circuit since he took on his current role in October of last year, getting familiar with the housewares business.

"We use these meetings both to review the progress we made in the past and to align on the plans going forward," Schnitzer said. "The mechanism that we used to focus that review is the Wayfair Recipe. We have a standardized recipe for success that we share with every supplier, and it forms the backbone of those meetings so we can talk through item by item how are we doing in our partnership, what's been going well, what do we need to do to get better. As we're preparing for these meetings, we are reviewing the recipe, having internal discussions about how do we want to focus that agenda, then see these partners and discuss how we're going to improve in 2020."

Wayfair's business is data driven, and a critical issue is how to deal with and apply that data.

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Yedi Houseware Launches Kitchen Electrics Line

By DONNA BOYLE SCHWARTZ
Contributing Editor

LOS ANGELES— Yedi Houseware is focusing on health, wellness, new cooking techniques and value-added features in its new kitchen appliances launch.

"Health has a lot to do with the trend of small appliances today," said Bobby Djavaheri, president of Yedi Houseware. "We constantly work side by side with our research and development team on how to make things healthier, including healthier in fabrication and healthier for use. For example, our ceramic lined air fryer is very popular amongst those who are against using Teflon."

Yedi is introducing two different air fryers: a 5.8-quart air fryer with ceramic components (model GV018); and a new 12.7-quart air fryer oven (model GV021).

"The air fryer is a fairly new kitchen appliance," Djavaheri said. "Over the past four years we have seen an

exponential and explosive jump year-to-year in the demand of this product. While the growth has truly been remarkable, the market for purchase has only been realized at, or around, 20% of the overall demand capacity—

only about 2 in 10 of consumers who would or will buy an air fryer have actually purchased. Stated clearly, 80% of potential consumers still have not purchased an air fryer. We see a huge market potential and great upside in this segment."

He continued, "We have been working diligently to figure out the best ways to advance the air fryer segment."

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Yedi's small electrics line includes air fryers, sous vide tools and pressure cookers.



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Stay Ready For The Long Term To Begin Again

FEW PEOPLE AT THE START of a promising 2020 could have imagined the U.S. anywhere close to a total societal lockdown three months later.

Imagining the unimaginable is becoming standard practice.

That doesn't add clarity and certainty to anything. This is the new normal of coping with the short term when nobody dares to predict when the long term will begin again.



very nature are conditioned to move forward, even if, tragically, there are casualties along the way. Wait-and-see apprehension is an understandable reaction to any situation in a state of alarming flux. Yet this is a moment for businesses to do everything within their fiscal, operational and compassionate responsibilities to resist strategic paralysis, which can lead to tactical atrophy.

Temporary Hit

Just as it is necessary to buffer a business and its people to withstand a prolonged crisis, it is no less vital to prep an organization for quick, nimble, intelligent response when the crisis clears.

Unexpected professional hazards lurk around every corner. For example, just when housewares sellers figured e-commerce was a safe haven if consumers were shut in and stores were temporarily closed, Amazon, with proper intention, suspended shipment creation until April 5 on all products other than household staples and medical supplies. Other leading retailers followed suit.

It might be a temporary hit, but it's another hit nonetheless when one more hit can seem unbearable.

Strict Orders

Strict social distancing guidelines and orders have restricted daily routines across the U.S. Let's hope such unprecedented, extreme measures set society on a path to a safer and healthier new normal.

It is natural to focus on the short term and how to survive a crisis that still seems so hard to imagine. Try not to let it suppress the will to move forward, to be as ready as possible for a long term that, one day, will begin again. For business. For life.

Stay safe.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Delays Expected As Supply Chain Reloads In China

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(were) expected to be at least at 90% capacity by the end of March. We are working with our factories to prioritize orders and expedite where possible. We are also working with customers for fill-in or replacement products on inventory we already have in the U.S.”

Lauren Greenwood, president of storage accessory developer YouCopia, said, “Our factories are almost back to full capacity and hitting ship dates without issue. Our brick-and-mortar supply has remained 100% in stock... We increased initial order quantities and safety stock level requirements for new items where historical data is lacking. We’ve been reviewing forecasts, extending ship windows, discussing back-up plans and maintaining constant communication with all of our supply chain partners.”

Companies that had increased domestic inventory levels in anticipation of an extended trade war between the U.S. and China might be able to mitigate the worst of the coronavirus-related supply chain disruption.

“Fortunately, we brought in additional inventory in case the tariff was implemented in December, and it is helping us through the current virus problem,” stated Jim Haskins, vp/marketing and product development for kitchen electrics and table-to-ovenware supplier Aroma Housewares.

Heshy Biegeleisen, founder of kitchen electrics developer Gourmia, added, “When the tariffs began, we realized the only way to survive it was to explore options and alliances that would make us a leaner, smarter brand... As a result, we are better prepared to deal with the potential impact of the coronavirus.”

A stalled economy and thousands of temporary store closings with much of the nation locked down to contain the coronavirus pandemic has thrown a wrench into the resumption of Chinese factory output suspended in the early stages of the outbreak there.

Strict social distancing guidelines and orders have shifted retail ordering priorities to

**“We are encouraged by
the recovery in China
on our supply chain.”**

—Robert O’Donnell,
H2 Brands Group

food, medicine, health care supplies and household essentials and food. Some housewares production lines in China are slowing again and warehouses there are filling as retailers in the U.S. and around the world cancel or suspend new orders and replenishment.

Even as Chinese production ramps up, shipping delays are still expected as each link in the Chinese supply chain reboots. This includes raw materials flow, trucking, ports and ocean freight.

Lance Hood, president of kitchen tool supplier Progressive International, said the production pinch in China extended in-stock dates by 30 to 45 days even before the social distancing lockdowns and temporary store closings began to divert retail orders.

Suppliers stressed that honest communication and engaged collaboration between vendors and their retail customers will be vital in assessing supply chain status, regulating delivery expectations and maintaining solid inventory levels through 2020 and into 2021.

Suppliers of mass market furniture sourced from China report that most factories here were running by mid-March, some at as little as 40% capacity but others at near full capacity. Shipping, which could lag by about two weeks to a month, was accelerating as well, suppliers said.

Mass-market furniture suppliers, long before the coronavirus outbreak, had tapped a diversified ready supply base— including Brazil, Vietnam, Indonesia and India— to mitigate reliance on China and its unsettled labor, political, social and trade factors.

Companies that diversified their supply chains in recent years to guard

“We see government restrictions as the biggest potential threat to disrupting operations.”

—Marc Wade,
Messermeister

against overdependence on China also face uncertainty about when factories in other locked down markets, such as Italy and India, will restart. Even U.S. and North American manufacturers that figured to help relieve shortages of Chinese imports, face potential, short-term production limitations if their employees are subjected to rigid social distancing restrictions.

Vendors are also taking measures to diversify stateside distribution points, even though such facilities generally are exempt from shelter-in-place restrictions.

“We see government restrictions as the biggest potential threat to disrupting operations,” said Marc Wade, vp/business development for cutlery and cutlery accessory supplier Messermeister. “Our focus has been to ensure best practices for health and wellness internally. Simultaneously, we are also shifting some inventory to alternate distribution centers to diversify the risk of a shutdown.” **HWB**

Mike Duff, Lauren DeBellis, Emily Cappiello and Donna Boyle Schwartz contributed reporting for this article.



Housewares Helping Virus-Wary Consumers Shelter At Home

NEW YORK— While Amazon and other big retailers have made it top priority in the near term to fill warehouses with medicine, food and household staples, home and housewares products are demonstrating high everyday significance with more people confined to their homes during the coronavirus crisis.

Such sheltering behavior is expected by some to continue to some degree long after the coronavirus crisis lifts.

A Wayfair spokesperson told Home-

World Business home and housewares has been strong for Wayfair as its customers follow stay-at-home orders. On the weekend of March 21 and 22, kitchen and storage sales surged 50% year over year while small electrics sales doubled.

Home office sales on Wayfair have seen a major advance, with desk and office chair sales five times what they had been in the three months prior, the Wayfair spokesperson said. Items

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CLARIFICATION: In a story about Brabantia in the March 11 issue, the Nic Bread Box will launch in light and dark gray colorways. Also, regarding colors the company is introducing, fir green is the new hue the company added in the Sort & Go collection with pine green, terracotta pink, champagne and mineral cinnamon appearing for the first time on other products.



Casual Dining Report



Wayfair has made strides in its whole home collections, such as Foundstone which features casual dining and tabletop.

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Mass-Market Retail Exploring Casual Dining Opportunities

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not only takes style seriously but also shares what it has embraced online.

When it comes to dining today, the casual part of the market has some distinct advantages, and mass-market retailers have been exploring the possibilities afforded them. In another advantageous development, e-commerce came along to provide a showcase for the depth and breadth of innovation. Taken together, their efforts have given casual dining greater visibility and support, especially as they integrate it into fresh approaches to the market, as Wayfair has done.

With the recent introduction of

its Foundstone curated collection, Wayfair not only offered a variety of casual dining sets, but also tabletop and servingware goods. The retailer is deliberately moving to become more of a whole home solution. Foundstone is defined as a collection by its mid-century styling. As is often the case on Wayfair, the presentation can incorporate a wide range of products under a style umbrella and is an alternative to merchandising on narrow segment terms.

Jill Pavlovich, Wayfair general manager of exclusive brands, said including housewares in the collection provided a wider palette they can use

to enhance their homes in accord with their lifestyle preferences. Shopping for the home is an emotional experience for Wayfair customers who want to express themselves but who also want to be inspired, she said, and those considerations drive how the retailer has developed its furniture presentation strategy. As Foundstone demonstrates, the same considerations are driving the Wayfair housewares merchandising strategy as it expands and raises the profile of that business.

“Our core housewares strategy has remained consistent,” Pavlovich said.

The Foundstone collection on the Wayfair site has offered some 50 dining tables in rectangular, square, oval and round configurations with wood, glass, concrete and marble tops, supported by everything from mid-century style flared legs to cage bases and

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pedestals. Most are dining height but one, at least in a recent review of the Wayfair site, was a countertop height table. Even the more traditional looks have a fashionable edge that creates a consistency of design throughout the presentation.

Foundation launched with an emphasis on mix and match, so Wayfair offers a wide variety of chairs, with 62 in the collection as recently merchandised on the site, and stools, 28 all told, that can work with dining tables. However, the retailer also had 33 dining sets as well as sideboards and buffets, bars and bar sets and bar carts available in the collection.

Walmart lately has scaled back what had been its in-store furniture presentation as it focuses more on bedding. Casual dining is a pretty strictly online segment for the retailer, but one of those that has benefited from Walmart's turn toward curating and coordinating online presentations.

An important aspect of how Walmart merchandises furniture today online is its curated Shop by Style



Off-pricer Big Lots offers a wide range of casual dining sets in multiple styles.

presentation, where shoppers can directly exercise their design preferences. The modern style landing page during a check not long ago promoted a casual dining set with a glass-top round table surrounded by black upholstered chairs. The dining table presentation included nine tables in

round and rectangular configurations with a couple clearly designed for flexibility in function.

Although online presentations have advantages, not all consumers want to shop furniture from a photo, and off-pricers don't invest heavily in e-commerce given their attraction as an in-store treasure hunt experience. They, too, however, are oriented toward casual dining today and presentations that reflect current design trends although perhaps a little further back on the design curve.

Big Lots is a key proponent. Unlike the luck of the draw presentation that they'll find at other off-pricers, Big Lots offers multiple casual dining sets in a consistent fashion and features multiple style choices. In a recent store check on Long Island, a Big Lots offered eight tables and a stand-alone counter set that converted into a table. It used tabletop signage to emphasize price and style. The tables scaled from a small, round faux marble top example that could seat four to larger rectangular tables that could seat six comfortably. The tables came in styles influenced by vintage, mid-century, farmhouse and rustic design but with sufficiently transitional looks to ensure they might fit in a range of home decor schemes. Seating varied with both chairs and stool in the case of the convertible counter and the Raleigh five-piece pub height dining set which included shelf storage at one end.

Big Lots offered a range of casual dining choice on the sales floor and even a traditional dining room set nearby. It couldn't offer online variety, but the store managed a fair amount of choice in relatively little space.

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TJX's HomeGoods takes a playful approach to a buffet table mounted on faux bicycles with basket storage.



Mass-market furniture vendors that offer casual dining pieces have been more attentive to home fashion sensibilities consumers hold.

nated eating places for spaces such as family rooms give consumers who want furniture that can work across a broad range of occasions, from family dinners to major gatherings of families and friends.

As additional evidence of how consumers today differ from those in the past, one mass-market furniture supplier commented that espoused couples no longer include formal dining needs in their wedding registries the way they once did. In the HomeWorld Business Registry Report, tabletop vendors also acknowledged a trend away from formal and toward more casual products in the choices couples have been making, particularly younger couples who are interested in personal choice and self-expression, and, as regards style, a more minimalist approach to home fashion.

Mass-market furniture vendors that offer casual dining pieces have been more attentive to home fashion sensibilities consumers hold. To the extent that dining is no longer confined to a particular space and setting, as consumers incorporate it into a broader set of home priorities, the furniture involved has to fit more precisely into a home's decor scheme and evolve with the home. Vendors have consistently updated their designs, which lately have featured more modern and glam looks alongside the farmhouse, cottage and rustic looks that had emerged as more popular and a contrast with the mid-century looks that overtook the marketplace several years ago.

Driven by a range of consumer and industry trends, casual dining clearly has established itself as a viable alternative to the traditional, and so opportunity for the segment, as consistently designed and refreshed to address evolving consumer preferences, may be greater than it ever was. **HWB**

Casual Dining

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Although they don't offer the same kind of consistent presentation Big Lots does, the TJX home-oriented retail formats do offer casual dining items on an in-and-out basis for shoppers who might be enticed to a purchase. Homestyle has more of a commitment to providing a casual dining offering, with a vintage, transitional and rustic dining set available at a recent store visit in a display approximately adjacent to a more traditionally scaled but mid-century styled table. The rustic piece was part of Homestyle's designer collection under the Nicole Miller label.

To enhance the casual dining presentation, Homesense set adjacent floor and rack seating presentations shoppers could tap. The store also offered an array of buffet, bar cart and related items to complement the core dining furniture.

For its part, a nearby HomeGoods offered only one round dining table and merchandised on a mix and match basis with nearby seating, but it included more novel items including a

counter buffet supported by a couple of faux bicycles mounting handlebar baskets that could be used for storage.

The HomeWorld Business Home Entertainment report study offers an indication of how consumers view dining in their lifestyle preference. Only 2% of respondents to the survey supporting the latest study said the dining room is the primary place they would entertain guests.

Yet, when asked what furniture items they might purchase for entertainment purposes, a quarter of respondents said they would buy a dining table. As for other furniture that might function in casual dining, 16.3% of consumers said they would consider bar or bar cart purchase and 13.3% said a stool.

When it comes to entertainment, men are slightly more likely on average than women to say they host guests in the dining room. Yet, women are more likely than men to say they would look to purchase a dining table over the year ahead at 28.4% versus 16.9%.

Still, the biggest disparity between where they entertain and what they want to purchase, as regards dining, comes among age groups. Consumers 40 to 59 in the survey expressed basi-

cally no interest in dining room entertaining, while only 3% of the respondents 60 and over and from 24 to 39 did so. However, 26% of 40 to 59 year old respondents looked to purchase a dining table, and 32% of those 24 to 39 year olds. The 60 to 73 year old consumers lagged, at 17%.

The results demonstrate that few consumers don't equate a dining table purchase with the intention of using the dining room to entertain guests, which suggests that consumers are thinking about using dining tables more flexibly. Indeed, in the survey, about 14% of consumers said the dining room is the place they most frequently use personal electronics.

Retailers certainly recognize that dining is taking a lifestyle turn. Vendors have been offering items that straddle the line between traditional and formal dining, with tables that tend to have a somewhat smaller scale, to incorporate more up-to-date styling and to take a positioning that offers choice in finish or seating, something evident at Wayfair and Homesense. At the same time, pub-height dining with comfortable stools for seating, bars and bar carts, sofa tables and stand-alone counter pieces designed as design-



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Kitchen Electrics

Select Brands' Friends coffeemaker with Central Perk logo is packaged with two mugs.



Select Brands Engages Consumer Lifestyles With Design Approach

By DONNA BOYLE SCHWARTZ
Contributing Editor

LENEXA, KS— Select Brands is appealing to consumer lifestyle changes with its latest round of kitchen appliance introductions, targeting the convenience, wellness and beverage categories with a host of new products.

“The on-demand culture and always-on lifestyle has created new pressures, and we’re investing in design

and functionality to make our products more personalized,” said Eric Endres, vp/marketing, Select Brands. “We’re also emphasizing the need to stay connected with our consumers. We’re working to make brand engagement faster, easier and more efficient to eliminate any stresses related to product questions or service. We want to communicate to our consumers that we understand and recognized that they are stretched. If we can do anything to

make life easier we want to step into that gap and assist.”

Endres pointed to Select’s new TRU cordless collection of appliances, a series of products powered by a rechargeable battery. The lineup includes a hand mixer, an immersion blender with a whisk attachment, a glass bowl food chopper and a taller food prep processor.

“Consumers gain the freedom to move around a little more while creating in the kitchen— or by the grill or at a tailgate,” Endres said, noting that the TRU series will launch in mid-2020.

Select also is spotlighting products supporting the continuing coffee trends, as well as items designed specifically for tea drinkers.

“As a specific product category trend, we’ve had our eye on the ‘third wave’ of coffee for some time,” Endres said. “Better coffee quality, transparency in sourcing, an emphasis on sustainability and innovative brew methods are all intrinsic to this new wave of coffee. Now roasters and baristas are able to share coffee origin stories with consumers. As this movement continues, consumers will begin to demand similar transparency and quality coffee for their home brewing experience. We’re already seeing coffee brewers evolve to incorporate more customization and functionality. We believe this is only the beginning and the customization will become expected, driving even more personalization.”

For the tea enthusiast, Select is launching a new Teamosa fusion tea

Mealthy Engages Home Cooks With New Kitchen Electrics

AUSTIN, TX— Mealthy is building on the success of its multi-functional cookers with its new kitchen appliances launching this season.

“We provide high-quality products with the most sought-after features, in a contemporary design with the necessary accessories, at an excellent price to provide outstanding value,” said Anna Di Meglio, head of marketing, Mealthy. “And it doesn’t stop there: Mealthy integrates products with technology through our app, website and digital platforms to continue the customer journey with 2,000 Mealthy-owned recipes, nutritional information, meal planning, grocery list, and one-click

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Mealthy's new AirFry 6-quart unit with large viewing window.

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Select Brands

continued from page 16

brewer, a new smart appliance paired with an app that not only operates the product but also connects the consumer to a personalized experience from pre-programmed brew settings for specific teas to customizable brewing preferences.

"We're very excited about the launch of the Teamosa fusion tea brewer," Endres said. "It marries the tradition of brewing tea with a technology component, has a unique aesthetic and is aimed at a specialty consumer. There is not another product with this type of functionality focused on the tea



Select Brands' Mickey Mouse double flip waffle maker.



The company's SpongeBob two-slice toaster.



A Star Wars slow cooker features themed sound bites.

brewing experience."

The company is also featuring a range of products designed to promote healthy cooking alternatives.

"Self-care and mental wellness have become consumer priorities," Endres noted. "If we can integrate healthy cooking, a community of other consumers and incremental value such as access to recipes and information, then we're helping to meet this very important need."

Licensed products have performed well for Select in the past, and the company is expanding on many of its licensed franchises for 2020, including Disney, Marvel, Star Wars, DC Comics, Nickelodeon and Toastmaster. Featured products include the Mickey Mouse double flip waffle maker, which was the top-selling licensed item last year, with a suggested retail price of \$79.99; a SpongeBob two-slice toaster that launched in February, with a suggested retail of \$34.99; a Friends 12-cup percolator with the Central Perk logo, packaged with two ceramic mugs; and a Star Wars digital slow cooker with themed sound bites, which will be available in the fourth quarter with a suggested retail of \$49.99.

The company has been experiencing strong growth in online sales and is expanding its consumer engagement efforts, according to Endres.

"We continue to see growth in e-commerce," he said. "There is a convenience factor to shopping online and the data shows smart phone-based purchases have rapidly increased. It's a space where consumers will continue to migrate. Now we're focused on not only selling in the wide open online space but striving to connect with, serve and maintain the customers that are invested online."

"We've also found new growth among specialty retailers that we attribute to our broad portfolio of brands and licenses," Endres continued. "These retailers are creating exciting in-store narratives and have emphasized connecting the online and in-store experiences for the consumer. Our marketing efforts will focus on ways to help the consumer move seamlessly between the digital and physical experiences with our brands and products."

Select is working closely with its retail partners on a wide variety of marketing tactics.

"In addition to tried-and-true strategies, there are so many new and exciting ways to market brands and products," Endres said. "We've been able to tap into a variety of strategies to market our appliances. Offering exclusive launch windows to our retail partners drives product demand and encourages our launch partners to champion the launch with additional resources. We've curated assortments meant to be available online only. We have utilized social media posts and advertising to drive new products and to point consumers to a specific retail partner."

He added, "We will continue to expand these tools to create as many shopping moments in as many different environments as possible. We're working to connect with consumers in an all-encompassing strategy. The goal is to build life-long brand loyalists who fall in love with our products and come back for more in the future." **HWB**



ABOVE: Mealthy's MultiPot 2.0 9-in-1 pressure cooker connects to an app for recipes and other content.

RIGHT: The CrispLid converts a pressure cooker to an air fryer.

Mealthy

continued from page 16

ingredient delivery— via Instacart and Amazon Fresh—to create lifetime Mealthy users."

She added, "Mealthy is the one-stop shop for all of your home-cooking needs. We provide the small appliances, like the Mealthy MultiPot electric pressure cooker, that save consumers time and enable them to easily prepare healthy, home-cooked meals."

Featured items include the Mealthy AirFry 6-quart unit, which features a touch screen with six preset cooking programs and knob; intuitive control panel; large viewing window; dehydrate and reheat programs; and keep warm mode. The unit comes with a non-stick crisping plate, stainless steel rack, tongs, parchment paper and a recipe book.

Mealthy also is offering the innovative CrispLid, which converts any 6-quart or 8-quart electric pressure cooker into an air fryer. The newest CrispLid includes five dehydrate settings and a deep basket, and comes with tongs, heat-resistant silicone mat, raised trivet and recipe book.

Another featured item is the Mealthy MultiPot 2.0, a 6-quart, 9-in-1 programmable electric pressure cooker that offers automatic sealing and pressure release, true slow cook functionality, easy-touch buttons and 9-in-1 cooking functionalities with 30-plus presets, including pressure cook, slow cook, steam, warm, rice, sauté, bake, yogurt and bread proof. The unit comes with a stainless steel cooking pot, raised trivet and steamer basket, extra gasket, silicone mitts, 8-ounce measuring cup, rice paddle, soup ladle and recipe book.

The Mealthy Hand Blend immersion blender offers users a quick and easy way to puree, blend, chop, whisk and more with one unit, which features 10 speeds, plus a turbo mode. The unit comes with a BPA-free 500-milliliter chopping cup, 600-milliliter smoothie cup with cover, whisk, recipe book and free recipe app for iOS and Android. **HWB**

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Yedi Housewares

continued from page 8

Adding the option of ceramic components and a ceramic cooking basket distinguishes the product from competitors. Taking a strong stance towards health and well-being, this feature will not only appeal to mothers, fathers and fitness enthusiasts, but to the general public, as we are seeing a huge trend in consumer awareness of health driven products.”

“In addition to ceramic components, a dehydrate function is in great demand,” Djavaheri added. “Loyal customers write to us regularly about the desire to add versatility to their air fryers with an ability to dehydrate their favorite foods.”

The 5.8-quart XL air fryer features a digital touch screen and easy-to-understand graphics allowing users to program specific time and temperature settings or use an array of associated built-in smart programs.

“The Yedi Houseware air fryer is the healthiest alternative to deep frying as it only requires a tablespoon of oil or less,” Djavaheri said. “This means, on average, you will consume 80% less fat while still enjoying all your favorite fried, grilled, baked and roasted foods.” Suggested retail price starts at \$99.95.

The 12.7-quart air fryer oven features a built-in rotisserie and accessories, allowing users to prepare whole roasts, chickens or racks of kebabs. The dehydrator function and accessories allow users to dry a variety of foods to create

healthy snacks at home.

“This is the perfect healthy gift for food-loving dads, mothers, family and friends,” Djavaheri said, noting that the unit features a “slimmer footprint to fit on your countertop and save your space. It uses 85% less fat than traditional deep frying methods with little to no oil.”

The accessories include a rotisserie tong, rotisserie rod, oven rack, drip pan, skewer rotisserie, rotisserie cage, rotisserie steak cage, shallow mesh basket, two mesh trays, Yedi oven mitts and a recipe book with vegan and keto recipes included. Suggested retail is \$149.95.

Also new is Yedi’s coffee grinder and maker. The unit features a five-setting conical burr grinder and a two- to 10-cup grinding selector, allowing the user to customize quantity for the amount of coffee. The unit features a built-in programmable timer with LCD clock that can be set up to 24 hours in advance and a two-hour keep-warm feature. Suggested retail is \$124.95.

The company is introducing an updated Sous Vide Total Package, including a deluxe accessory kit. The sous vide unit heats and circulates water at an exact temperature with up to 99 hours and 59 minutes of cooking time, in temperatures ranging from 77 to 203 degrees Fahrenheit to allow for an array of culinary applications. The unit is designed with a built-in clamp that secures it onto any heat-safe bucket, pot or pan. The total package includes the sous vide unit,

one hand pump, 10 reusable FDA-certified, BPA-free gallon size vacuum seal bags, four sous vide container clips, one vacuum bag sealing clip, and a recipe book with easy-to-use cooking timetables. Suggested retail is \$89.95.

Yedi also is featuring its Total Package 6-in-1 Grill that works as a contact grill, waffle maker, panini press, full grill, full griddle or half grill/half griddle; the unit also has “top melt” and “sear to the max” heating functions. The control panel allows the top and bottom temperatures to be controlled separately; the



reversible plates and built-in drip tray are removable and dishwasher safe for easy cleanup. Accessories include a cleaning brush with soft, flexible bristles that are safe for non-stick cookware, and BPA-free spatula/tongs. Suggested retail is \$89.95.

A Total Package Pressure Cooker is a 9-in-1 appliance capable of preparing full entrées in minutes: the unit can pressure cook, slow cook, sauté, steam, make cakes, pasteurize, make yogurt, cook rice, and warm. Built-in settings include poultry, meat/stew, bean/chili, soup, sauté/sear, cake, rice, egg, multigrain, porridge, steam/veggies, slow cook, keep warm, yogurt, and manual pressure cook. The accessory kit includes a tempered glass lid, two egg racks/steaming trivets, ladle, rice paddle, cooking mitts, extra silicone sealing ring, stainless steel steaming basket, stainless steel inner cooking pot, measuring cup, recipe book, cooking timetables, and easy to use “cheat sheets.” Suggested retail starts at \$99.95.

Djavaheri noted that Yedi is constantly adding new accessories to help consumers use the products. “No one beats our ‘total package’

value,” he asserted. “All of our items come with all accessories needed for a starter kit. Individuals who are new to the tech savvy small appliance world will have it much easier with our products, as we provide cheat sheets, recipe booklets with 100 recipes per item, and \$40 worth of accessories, all included in each selling unit.” **HWB**



ABOVE: Yedi’s pressure cooker is a 9-in-1 appliance and comes with a cooking accessory kit.

LEFT: The company’s sous vide package includes a deluxe accessory kit.

FAR LEFT: Yedi’s 5.8-quart XL air fryer with digital touch screen.



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Cook & Bake

Social distancing and separate workstations have been implemented at the Smithey Ironware factory.



Will Social Distancing Impact Cookware Manufacturing?

BY EMILY CAPPIELLO
Senior Editor

NEW YORK— As the industry continues to deal with the continued fallout from the coronavirus, the country has taken several routes to help stop the spread. While degrees of severity vary— New York has ordered 100% of the non-essential workforce to stay home while Texas has put a “shelter-in-place” order into effect— one of the ways to stop the spread throughout the country has been social distancing.

Social distancing is defined as deliberately putting extra space— in this case, six feet or more— in between yourself and other people. However, in some situations during the manufacturing process, it may be challenging to accommodate for social distancing. But in an abundance of caution, many domestic cookware manufacturers are heeding the call for safety. While some

are already set up for this type of manufacturing, others have had to make adjustments to scheduling and layout to make it work.

Will Copenhaver, vp/sales and marketing for Smithey Ironware, said that his company has set up workstations

at least six feet away from each other in order to maintain social distancing. However, it hasn’t been a large undertaking for the company.

“It keeps people spread out and in their own spaces, although it’s not a lot different from how we currently work,” he said.

Additionally, he said Smithey is urging its employees to embrace the social shift, which includes some of the most recent hygienic practices, including no handshakes, and lots of soap and hand sanitizer.

Another major cookware company said that it, too, has the best interest of all its employees in mind when working with the current constraints of the climate in the U.S.

“Our team around the globe is being extremely proactive and committed at all levels, facilities, and offices to ensure everyone stays as healthy as possible to maintain our service levels,” said one cookware supplier.

And it’s not just the manufacturing floor in which manufacturers are making sure to protect its employees. USA Pan’s John Bundy III said there are other places, too, in which he has urged his employees to practice social distancing.

“We are practicing social distancing not only on our manufacturing floor, but also in the break room,” said Bundy.

He noted that he has not seen this strategy impacting production of cookware thus far, however, it could change if COVID-19 concerns continue.

Bobby Griggs, vp/Heritage Steel

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Heritage Steel has boosted its cleaning regimen at its U.S. cookware facility.



Heritage Steel has stepped up its brand identity initiatives.



Heritage Steel Crafts U.S.-Made Brand Identity

BY EMILY CAPPIELLO
Senior Editor

CLARKSVILLE, TN— After establishing itself as a cookware brand that has become a partner for those in the independent retail market, Hammer Stahl decided it was time for a change. The brand’s parent company, New Era, wanted to make a distinction between its cutlery line, which is imported from Germany, and its stainless steel cookware collection, which is domestically-made.

Additionally, the company was looking for a way to impress upon the consumer that Hammer Stahl wasn’t a cutlery line that made cookware— it is a company that is dedicated to the craft of manufacturing cookware.

So, Hammer Stahl cookware was officially re-branded as Heritage Steel and made its debut at the 2019 International Home + Housewares Show.

Now, a little more than a year later, Heritage Steel is establishing its market share. To find out more about how Heritage Steel is making inroads into the retail market, HOMEWORLD BUSINESS® recently spoke to Bobby Griggs, vp/Heritage Steel, about what the company is doing to grow the newly-rebranded line of cookware and how consumers are beginning to recognize its made in the U.S. messaging.

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LEFT: MasterPan offers a range of divided pan options.

BELOW, FROM TOP: Meyer's Anolon divided grill and griddle skillet.

Nordic Ware's divided sauce pan and saute pan.

Lodge's bacon and egg griddle with connected dividers.



Divided Pan Options Picking Up Market Momentum

NEW YORK— During the last few years, sheet pan meals gained favor with consumers. These home cooks, both novice and advanced, turned to sheet pans for ease of use. These pans could accommodate multiple foods, from fish and chicken to vegetables and starches, on one pan, making it easy to cook a full meal while turning attention elsewhere and making clean-up an easy feat, too.

But now, there is a new trend that is picking up steam in the cookware market that could rival the popularity of sheet pan cooking— divided pans. While these products aren't all new— some have been around for several years— the products are catching the eyes of consumers who continue to look for new ways to optimize their time in the kitchen. But, will they replace the sheet pan meal that consumers have turned to for the last few years?

Raj Nagrani, sales director, designer and co-founder of MasterPan, said he doesn't think divided pans will be used in lieu of sheet pans to create meals, but will allow home cooks more alternatives to cooking at home.

"I don't think they are the new sheet pan or can replace the sheet pan but more just an added option for the busy consumer for healthy cooking but with extra options of now being able to cook several foods at the same time on a different heat source versus just in an oven. With our pan, you can cook a

full meal for up to four people without having everything spilling over each other," he said.

Jennifer Dalquist, evp/sales and marketing at Nordic Ware, agreed that divided pans are gaining traction in the market and believes the pans appeal to more than just those looking to make easy meals on a time constraint.

"Divided pans target several different needs," she explained. "One of these is for people who are going for the minimalist lifestyle and who just want one or two pans that can do everything. Divided pans also seem to appeal to people who heat a lot of leftovers and don't like heating stuff in the microwave. They're also good for people who don't want to wash two or three separate pans after cooking."

Dalquist also said that divided pans can actually help home cooks in a safe and practical way, too, as food allergies and intolerances, as well as different dietary lifestyles, are top-of-mind with consumers. This can be an issue when creating meals at home, but an issue that can be solved with the use of divided pans.

"These pans can help make meals for families with picky eaters. For example, if adults want chicken to have spicy sauce on it, but a child would prefer plain chicken with no sauce, it can still be made in the same pan. And, with food intolerance/allergies, it can help to keep foods and sauces away from

each other, allowing more than one meal to be cooked at once," she said.

Manufacturers agree that these pans may shine the spotlight on the cookware segment, attracting both new customers as well as those who are looking for a bit of creativity in the kitchen.

"These pans might encourage audiences who haven't made the commitment to a mid-priced piece of cookware to try it out," said Dalquist.

Added Nagrani, "You can tell it has definitely stirred attention in the cookware industry, simply by seeing some of the major brands out there designing and adding on multi-section pans to their product lines. I think that multi-section pans are no longer just a novelty."

Nagrani noted that the cookware industry has also improved on the quality, coatings and workmanship surrounding the manufacture of these pans. **HWB**



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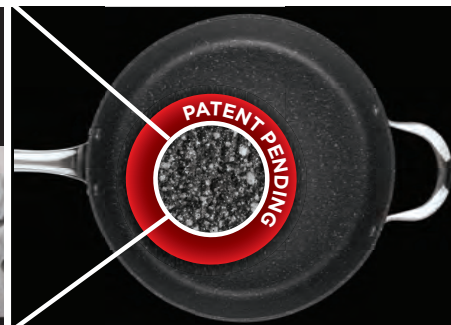
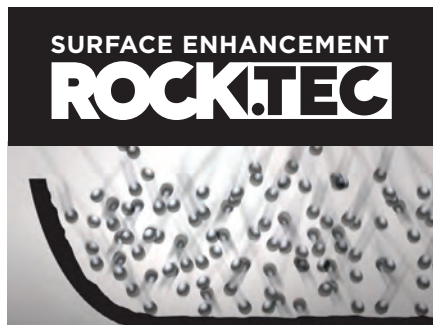
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RIGHT: Tramontina's 11-piece nesting cookware set with tempered glass lids.

BOTTOM: The new cookware set nests for compact storage.



Tramontina Provides Nesting Cookware For Storage Solution

SUGAR LAND, TX— As consumers continue to look for products that are solution-driven, cookware sets that save storage space in the kitchen continue to be top-of-mind. To help meet this demand, Tramontina is bringing its new 11-piece nesting cookware set to the market.

According to the company, the nesting cookware set is designed to bring a new dimension to compact storage. It includes a full range of essential pots and pans for the home kitchen, with the vessels and lids designed to nest for unusually compact storage. When stacked and stored, it is more than 50% more compact than non-nesting sets, said the company, and the footprint for the set is no bigger than the footprint for one single pan.

According to the company, the style of the cookware is contemporary, with a focus on quality. The nesting cookware set features heavy-gauge aluminum for heat conductivity, with a durable porcelain enamel exterior and high-performance non-

stick interior, the company said. Additionally, the non-stick interior coating is a three coat PFOA-free Teflon Platinum non-stick coating.

The line also comes with added benefits for consumer convenience, said Tramontina. According to the company, the tempered glass lids are designed to make cooking easier, and are both heat-resistant and shatter-resistant. The lids, too, come equipped with a black natural silicone rim for a tight fit on the pan. A knob on the lid can double as a spoon rest during cooking, while the sturdy riveted handles feature soft-grip black silicone for comfort, the company said.

The cookware works on gas, electric and ceramic glass stovetops, and it is oven-safe up to 350-degrees Fahrenheit (176-degrees Celsius). The entire set is dishwasher safe and easy to clean, according to Tramontina.

The nesting cookware set includes a 12-Inch sauté pan; 3-quart casserole with lid; 1.25-quart sauce pan with lid; 2-quart saucepan with lid; 3-quart saucepan with lid; and 4.75-quart sauce pot with lid.

The line is available in two colors, metallic red or metallic gray. The Tramontina 11-piece nesting cookware set comes with a lifetime warranty, the company said. In addition, the company noted that the nesting cookware set is designed to be self-merchandising, with full color packaging that showcases the product and its features and benefits.

The set will be available for shipping in spring 2020 and has a suggested retail price of \$149.99. **HWB**



Social Distancing

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cookware, hasn't had to redistribute manufacturing stations, but made some other significant changes to the process in order to keep concerns about COVID-19 at bay, he said.

"Our factory production layout naturally provides for social distancing since each operation is typically done by a single staff person and they are eight to 10 feet apart. But, we have increased our facility cleaning regimen and made staff aware that they should not to come to work if they show the slightest signs of being ill. We are also reiterating to staff to follow CDC guidelines on hand washing," said Griggs.

Additionally, while a slowdown in production has not yet been seen, Griggs predicted that the continued focus on eliminating coronavirus through social distancing, as well as more extreme measures, will eventually impact domestic production. He noted he is already seeing a ripple effect on imported parts and products.

"We do feel, ultimately, this may impact production if the state or the U.S. government requires closure. Additionally, our supply chain and imported goods has been disrupted since the outbreak in China. We are hoping this improves in the weeks ahead," he said.

Another cookware vendor added that the manufacturing process and the dedication of factory workers has not been an issue for the high-volume cookware

USA Pan has taken proactive precautionary steps in its factory.



company. However, employees that are stationed inside the office have been more reluctant to continue to work in-house even when work areas are already six feet or more away from each other. While the company has made working hours flexible for its office employees, it may hinder the production and fulfillment process moving forward.

However, several additional cookware vendors that spoke to HomeWorld Business said there may be a sales slowdown unrelated to production, as major retailers are holding on household orders, citing a focus on stocking health, wellness and food products. Amazon, too, has said it will not receive inventory for household items until at least April 5. These factors may cause a backup in the supply chain and impact sales. **HWB**

Smithey Ironware has maintained social distancing in its cookware factory.



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Heritage Steel

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HomeWorld Business: It’s been a year since you rebranded your Heritage Steel cookware. Can you tell me what has changed in that time?

Bobby Griggs: Our customers and retailers alike have really started to begin to identify and resonate with the Heritage Steel brand. Although there is still some brand lag concerning some still identifying our cookware as Hammer Stahl, we have seen the consumer clearly is starting to identify our cookware as made in U.S. And, even more hyper-local, we feel the consumer is starting to understand that we are custom cookware that is crafted in Clarksville, TN. We feel that because of this, both our in-store and e-tail sales are up. Also, organic searches for our products are also showing brand stickiness.

HWB: What has the industry response been to the rebrand during the last year?

BG: It was very mixed, but it is beginning to level out. Those retailers that have embraced the brand change have expressed that the change has done exactly what we wanted it to do, which was to help more clearly define our ‘Made in the USA’ product lines from those we import. Our retail partners have appreciated the clear separation of the two and we are seeing this reflected in our sales. We are still working hard to continually improve our communication and branding initiatives to help our retailers better present the brands.

HWB: How do you feel this effort has translated to the consumer?

BG: We have seen improved sales performance both in store and online. Additionally, we have received emails asking for clarification and almost all are appreciative that we are clearly separating our imported goods from our cookware crafted here.

I think the intentional effort to clearly and authentically communicate how and where our products are manufactured has been well received. Our customers have connected with the Heritage part of the brand and have started to appreciate and recognize our company’s long history of domestically manufacturing cookware. It appears this marketing strategy has created a thirst to learn more about our company and heritage.

HWB: What are your plans for continuing to build on this brand moving forward?

BG: We have several marketing initiatives to help continue to drive both the Heritage Steel and Hammer Stahl brands. First, we are continuing to update sales and marketing literature, boxing and internal marketing and support collateral in the packaging. Secondly, we are launching a video series focused on usage, education and support of the product lines that will help maximize the value and performance for the consumer using the products.

To expand our reach, we are partnering with several social influencers. We are in the process of developing brand specific events with bloggers and social

media influencers in some of our retailers’ local markets.

At the factory, we have been fortunate to see significant increase in demand, so we are investing in new machinery, adding additional staff and expanding our production lines.

HWB: What do you feel that the industry should know about Heritage Steel if they don’t already?

BG: I really want both our retailers and consumers to know that we are committed to a few basic principles. We want people to fall in love with cooking and sharing great meals together at home. Our mission is to help people share recipes, ideas and experience great food on a consistent basis.

Secondly, we are committed to independent retailers and really want to provide a premium product that provides exceptional value for the consumer while offering the business owner a brand they make money with and trust long term.

Finally, we are committed to New Era, Heritage Steel’s parent company’s, vision of having a thriving cookware factory in the U.S. that is committed to its employees, the local community, its partners and customers. **HWB**



ABOVE: Heritage Steel has continued to update its brand identity as a U.S. cookware producer.

BELOW: The brand is expanding its reach with several culinary social influencers.



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Zefiro Offers Sustainable Household Solutions

BY LAUREN DE BELLIS
Senior Editor

CHICAGO— As U.S. consumers increasingly continue to adopt more sustainable lifestyle practices, the demand for zero-waste goods as an alternative to single-use products made from plastic is rising.

The marketplace is primed for new vendors to enter with their sustainable solutions, such as the case with Zefiro, a supplier of sustainably made household goods. The company's product assortment ranges from items such as bamboo cutting boards, cotton mesh produce bags to cleaning tools and toothbrushes made of bamboo and sisal.

Founded by Carley Pulford, a Canadian entrepreneur who began her career in Shanghai, the company's mission is to offer consumers functional household goods, made from quality materials that are better for the planet and have an affordable pricepoint. Pulford, and her husband Mike Elephante, whose career has been rooted in the housewares industry for many years, leveraged their combined industry experience to launch their company last year.

"We want to offer consumers sustainable alternatives to plastics that are easy and still function in the same

way," said Pulford.

After being inspired by friends and family, Pulford began researching the harmful chemicals often found in plastics. For Pulford, this led to a more critical eye when shopping and what she said, was not enough selection of sustainable products to suit her needs. A trip to a zero-waste store in Vancouver, Canada eventually inspired Pulford and Elephante to start Zefiro.

"I would say 90 to 100 percent of the materials we use for our products are compostable. We choose materials that are all natural such as bamboo, beechwood, lotus wood and cotton rope, all of which is mostly compostable. When we approach a product idea, we are always thinking about the end of its lifecycle and are conscious if the item presents itself as a simple swap for a common single-use good," said Pulford.

The company's introduction comes at a moment when retailers are eager to invite more sustainable products into their inventory, and are also looking for more authenticity of products that are sustainably made. The company is certainly looking to share Zefiro goods with a wide variety of retail channels in the future, but for now Pulford said they are focused on grocery and specialty stores such as the independent

gourmet housewares retail channel, of which many are adopting their own zero-waste policies.

"People are starting to get more into living a plastic-less lifestyle and are on the hunt for simple swaps to help them do so. With early adopters, their choices were immediate and the rise of zero-waste stores provides them an easy place for people to shop according to their philosophy. However, for those coming around to the idea, why not have an option in your local grocery store," said Pulford.

While Zefiro products are manufactured in China, Pulford said in order to fulfill customer and online orders, their products have been delivered to their warehouse in Chicago in a timely manner, despite the recent supply chain disruptions.

With Pulford and Elephante having lived and worked in China for 10 years, the company has well-established relationships and was able to get ahead of disruptions. The couple anticipated any delays in product due to the Chinese New Year holiday and have been well prepped and ordered more than what they anticipated they needed.

"Carley was the executive director at the Chamber of Commerce in Canada and is experienced in working with the Chinese government, building business relationships and speaks several languages. With my experience working with housewares manufacturers and various retail channels, we had a good core set of experience and values that led to our launch and our preparedness," said Elephante. **HWB**



Rosle USA Positions Brand Identity, New Kitchenware

MIAMI— Having undergone a bit of a rebirth since breaking off from Emile Henry, Rösle USA has been honing its brand identity and tightening up its kitchenware assortment to better fit the needs of today's U.S. consumers.

The company is introducing new cutlery and additional kitchenware, including a revamped barbecue program that underscore its messaging of offering up best in class kitchenware to the U.S. market. The company's goal over the next year is to further hone this message by offering quality goods that appeal to consumers that appreciate professional tools.

One of the highlights for 2020 is the Masterclass cutlery assortment. The knives in this series are made in Solingen, Germany, from stainless steel and include walnut handles. The company's logo is embossed in steel, on the handles.

The knife assortment includes a chef's, santoku, bread, vegetable, carving and universal knife. The Masterclass of cutlery is available in open stock.

The company said it is also putting a spotlight on its barbecue category, as it leverages the continued increased interest by U.S. consumers to grill more often and in many cases, year-round.

Some of the barbecue tools include various grills, some of which can be used for tailgating and smoking. Rösle will also highlight its roster of grilling accessories in the coming months. **HWB**



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Best Accessory Group Rolls Out Westinghouse Personal Care Line

BY DONNA BOYLE SCHWARTZ
Contributing Editor

NEW YORK— Best Accessory Group is highlighting a complete range of personal care appliances, trimmers and groomers under its Westinghouse brand license.

“Best Accessory Group is proud to be a licensee of the Westinghouse Electric Corporation, which was founded over 130 years ago and remains a trusted name globally in consumer products, built on a heritage of innovation and entrepreneurial spirit,” said Michael Cohen, vp/sales and division head for Best Accessory Group. “Together we are bringing consumers the best quality products that are on-trend, fashionable and useful, at unbeatable prices.”

He added, “Best Accessory Group’s team of accomplished merchandisers and designers relentlessly search the world to bring the hottest new trends and products to market, season after season. These allow our customers to achieve maximum sales, as they are consistently receiving trend-right merchandise in a timely fashion.”

Featured Westinghouse brand products include the Cordless Cleansing Facial Brush, a water-resistant unit designed to cleanse, exfoliate and prepare skin moisturizers and makeup. The Facial Stimulator is a high-frequency massager that operates at 6,000 vibrations per minute to stimulate the skin. The Facial Hair Remover is a compact and portable unit that includes a built-in light. The Makeup Spin Brush comes with two brush heads and operates at 190 rotations per minute to provide smooth makeup application using powders or liquids.

Other Westinghouse personal care tools in-

clude the Eyebrow Hair Remover, which features a built-in light and precision tip to maintain shaped eyebrows; the Vacuum Pore Cleanser, a dual speed model that includes four suction nozzles to deep clean pores of excess oil and blackheads; the Heated Eyelash Curler that uses heated coils to deliver mild uniform heat throughout eyelashes for a lasting curl; and the Heated Volumizing Hairbrush, which features two heat settings, tangle-free bristles and a rotating swivel cord that allows users to achieve professional styling results with straightening, curling or volumizing.

Additional products in the line include the Precision Beauty Trimmer, featuring a precision swivel blade, two-sided eyebrow trimming comb for easy and accurate trimming of long and short hair, and high quality stainless steel blades; the Callus Remover, which uses 3,000 rotations per minute to gently exfoliate dry, flaky skin on feet; the Ceramic Tourmaline 1-inch Curling Iron, which heats up to 400 degrees to create long-lasting curls; the Ionic Tourmaline Hair Dryer, which features a 1,875-watt and powerful air

flow and uses ceramic tourmaline technology for frizz control, and soft, smooth hair; the Ceramic Tour-

maline 1-inch Hair Straightener that adds shine and tames frizz; the Ceramic Tourmaline Spiral Curling Wand, a professional quality tool to style hair with soft, bouncy, long-lasting curls and waves; and the Rechargeable Wet/Dry Shaver, with 3-in-1 blade technology and light up battery indicator.

The Cordless Makeup Brush Cleaner includes a plastic bowl, eight rubber collars, two spindles and one brush spinner; the Cordless Grooming System is an all in one multi-purpose head to toe grooming and trimming set, including stainless steel blades for a close and smooth shave, multi-purpose trimmer, foil shaver, ear and nose trimmer, stubble comb, beard comb and cleaning brush; and the Rechargeable Hair Remover has a built in LED light, three shaving heads and a USB charger.

Other featured Westinghouse products in the line include the Precision Nose & Hair Trimmer with rotary speed and durable stainless steel blades to remove unwanted nose and ear hair; the Cordless All-In-One Trimmer, with an ergonomic handle, rechargeable USB, three trimming combs and an ultra thin sharp and durable blade for a precise and close shave; and the Precision Dual Blade Trimmer, with a flexible head and dual sided stainless steel blades. **HWB**

FROM LEFT: Best Accessory Group’s licensed Westinghouse line includes a makeup spin brush, facial hair remover and cleansing facial brush.



Crane’s new cool mist humidifier features a top fill lid.



Crane USA Releases Top-Fill Cool Mist Humidifier

ITASCA, IL— Crane USA is focusing on improving indoor air quality, highlighting new products in the humidifier category.

The new Crane Top Fill Cool Mist Humidifier is an easy-to-clean, filter-free, top fill, one-gallon cool mist humidifier with aroma diffuser.

“Not only is Crane’s new top fill easy to clean and easy to fill with a dishwasher safe mist lid, but you can add essential oils directly in the tank for a restful sleep,” said Katie Sotor, vp/Crane USA. “Ultrasonic cool mist increases moisture in the air for easier breathing and a good night’s sleep; it relieves cough, cold, and flu symptoms, nasal congestion, dry cough, sinus irritation, nose bleeds, and dry skin and hair and is recommended as a non-medicated alternative to over the counter cough and cold medicine. The biggest feature for customers is that the top fill is very easy to clean.”

The unit effectively humidifies rooms up to 200 square feet; has an optional color-changing night light; and runs whisper quiet for up to 24 hours with an automatic shut off function when the water tank is empty. Suggested retail price is \$69.99. **HWB**

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IMC Building Business Network Through Digital Division

BY MIKE DUFF
Executive Editor

LAS VEGAS— With COVID-19 interrupting trade show schedules, International Market Centers has been building its IMC digital operation to serve the home furnishings industry in a trying time and has developed interim measures to give buyers and vendors resources to help them cope with the disruption.

IMC is pointing people to its show websites to find tools to keep lines of communication open including a new ShopZio B2B platform.

In the not-too-distant future, though, IMC_di will introduce its own platform as a robust forum where retailers and vendors can continually build their relationships. Eric Dean, IMC_di's president, said that establishing the online forum linking the home furnishings and gift sector, buyers and suppliers alike, will provide an industry-focused service that can strengthen bonds when trade shows aren't operating and make markets a little easier to work.

The division was to function through and between regularly scheduled markets. Although the operation is building at a time of uncertainty, IMC_di promises to bolster relationships and enhance communication across the home furnishings industry when the online platform launches. Target for its rollout is in the fall of this year.

Established as a wholly-owned, stand-alone B2B e-commerce IMC division, IMC_di's basic mission is to provide vendors a single integrated digital platform to help them reach new buyers, capture leads and grow sales. The e-commerce-enabled platform gives buyers the ability to conduct transactions in-person or online through one integrated account, and so bridge physical and digital business interactions.

The new division builds from IMC's

acquisition of two technology companies already largely focused on the home furnishings and gift industries: Pharos, which developed integrated sales, marketing and commissioning software; and RepZio, which organized a business-to-business sales solution and digital marketplace to allow wholesale vendors and buyers to connect.

Dean, a founder of Pharos, became president of IMC_di, while Max and Alex Fraser, RepZio founders, became svcs as did Brandon Ward, svp/digital.

Dean pointed out that the experience IMC_di's management has in developing tech within the home goods and gifts sectors is a critical advantage that the organization is applying to ensure its services are focused on the needs of home furnishings buyers and sellers. The home furnishings business is complex, he emphasized, and to provide services, a company has to recognize that a large number of vendors and retailers interact and that, moreover, they operate across a vast scale in terms of sales, organization and specialty.

At the core, Dean said, IMC is creating a resource that can effectively connect buyers and sellers in a digital format that allows them to share resources and transact business.

"What's most important here is to be able to grow the industry by removing friction," Dean said.

The division will function as a B2B marketplace that will give buyers convenient access to product offers from myriad vendors. On the other side of the equation, it will provide tools that will help vendors merchandise on the site effectively. Software modules include sales scanning apps, product management and email tools, CRM systems and e-commerce websites. Also, IMC_di offers smart showroom tools covering badge scanning, data capture and sales to enhance the at-market experience. Functions are discrete and flexible so



"What's most important here is to be able to grow the industry by removing friction."

—Eric Dean,
International Market Centers

users can customize by need and budget, and IMC has set tiered pricing for its exhibitors.

Faced with the coronavirus and ensuing market closures and postponements, IMC has put greater emphasis on its digital B2B initiative. In mid-March, the company said that it had hired additional staff to work on in development, implementation, marketing and user support roles.

Bob Maricich, IMC CEO, said, "IMC is not slowing down. We are accelerating our investment in digital. With COVID-19 causing postponement of our March and April markets in Atlanta and High Point, we are taking aggressive steps to digitally connect buyers and sellers wherever and whenever they need to meet to do business."

In addition to developing the platform, IMC has made the point that visitors to its websites will be able to find tools they can use in the coronavirus-disrupted market environment to get on with business even before IMC_di unveils its platform.

"IMC is taking aggressive steps to digitally connect buyers and sellers, wherever and whenever they need to meet to do business," Maricich said. "We have two existing tools— our market websites and the ShopZio B2B platform— available to assist in this effort." **HWB**

Adesso Features New Lighting Designs

NEW YORK— Adesso is featuring new products that underscore what it has been doing for a long time, producing lighting that manifests forward thinking design.

Among the products that Adesso is featuring to satisfy shoppers is the Eden table lamp, a Boho design that taps into underlying if not currently central issues that has been affecting consumer purchasing: sustainability and enhancing homes with natural looks that promote wellness. In the case of the Eden lamp, a sustainable walnut rubberwood tripod base makes a statement and is paired with a woven natural paper shade that reveals a rich texture when lit. A beige fabric covered cord hanging from the center wood pole finishes off the design. A 3-way rotary socket switch operates a bulb up to 100 watts or an equivalent CFL.

Other products Adesso currently is featuring include the Martin table lamp, also offering a natural oak wood look with a touch of antique brass metal and a retro white textured fabric shade.

In another take on wellness, the sleek, modern Cosmo LED torchiere supports wellness by allowing users to sync indoor lighting up with circadian rhythms through adjustment of color temperature throughout the day. In a brushed steel finish and a textured white fabric shade, the light operates from a touch switch located on the pole, which is also used to adjust the light intensity offering a full range of brightness options. **HWB**



Adesso's Eden table lamp highlights a Boho design.

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Wayfair

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"There's been a lot more data that has been requested and digested by suppliers than we've seen in the past, which is great news for us because we've always had it, and we're excited to have partners who are interested in it," Puchta said.

For newer suppliers, including those from the housewares business who have come on more recently as the company has expanded beyond furnishings, getting a grip on how Wayfair operates and evaluates is an important step in advancing the relationship.

"I give our supplier base a ton of credit," Schnitzer said. "It's an incredibly savvy group. They are balancing demands across a lot of different channels. One of the first phases for us in any new supplier relationship is educational around the metrics Wayfair cares about and how we measure them specifically."

One issue Wayfair cares about is fill time in drop ship operations. Wayfair wants to work with vendors as they evaluate the elapse time from when a customer places an order until an item ships from a warehouse and as they move to fill drop ship orders as effectively as possible.

"There is, actually, when you dig into that metric, a number of different places where you can 'stop the clock,'" Schnitzer said. "So is it the moment that I put the label on the package or is it the moment that the Fedex truck door closes with the packages inside it or is it the moment that Fedex scans it into its sort center? Depending on which way you measure that, you're going to get to a different answer. We do a lot of upfront education on the metrics and how we measure them.

And then, on our side, we do our very best to make those metrics readily and easily available in as near to real time. A big initiative for us over the last year and looking forward is building out our supplier partner portal, which is the one-stop shop for all of our supplier partners to access all of the data about our relationship together. And so we're making those metrics readily available and helping to guide our partners to what we believe are the appropriate actions to take to drive improvement. Everyone is receptive to learning what we care about and partnering to do things that are beneficial as we try to build this business together."

Trade shows are important milestones in Wayfair's year, he said.

"We can orient around, check out progress and make sure we're on track and, if we're not on track, we can use them as an opportunity to course correct. Our teams are working day in and day out. But these trade shows are an opportunity to look in at the progress of that work all at once. Trade shows also are a chance to get a little bit more of the pulse of the industry and to understand what the macro trends are, so we do appreciate that opportunity."

Wayfair has been left more to its own devices given recent show cancellations, but it will continue to pursue its goals and emphasize its approach to success.

"We're driving the Wayfair Recipe," Schnitzer said. "Supplier specific conversation will vary depending on where they are and the elements of the recipe we're focused on. We may have a set of partners where we are working together to increase the assortment that they have on the site. That can be a focus area over a period of months. You could imagine another supplier where we have a broad assortment, but we need



"We have a standardized recipe for success that we share with every supplier."

—Tom Schnitzer, Wayfair

to improve the quality of the merchandising. We would need discussion on the assets, the best way to portray those products in what light, what information to highlight. Supply chain is a rich area of focus for a lot of our partners right now. So how do we both get faster to the end customer, which usually involves forward positioning and frequently involves use of our CastleGate third party logistics network. But at the same time we need to be really cost efficient. We'll have conversations about how we balance those trade offs and how we better partner to drive speed without increasing costs. Those are three examples of recipe elements we might be focused on with a supplier."

Wayfair wants partners to maintain a focus on its many considerations to promote success.

"We want suppliers to understand that Wayfair is a platform, that there is a proven recipe for driving success on the platform and that they have to be resourced appropriately and focused on the recipe elements in order to be successful. The nuances will vary," Schnitzer said.

The emphasis on supplier adoption and application will continue as well, Puchta pointed out.

"It's a sense of this solidification of the idea that data needs to be easy for suppliers to get and manage on their own all the time because of the interest in that information and making decisions based on that information as opposed to a buyer walking in and saying,

'I think this looks trendy, and so we'd like if for all doors,'" she said. "That is not how Wayfair does business. And there has been a shift toward the idea of using this data and having it readily available. Wayfair is taking the steps to create that environment to have that access to that data."

Schnitzer said that his experience at industry events have given him new perspectives on housewares.

"I've been really excited by the breadth of assortment and design that I'm seeing as I visit these shows," he said. "It's such a great fit for our model that we can effectively merchandise and share with our customer an incredibly wide range of designs in a product like a table linen or a dinner plate. A traditional brick and mortar would really be constrained on the inventory they could have on hand. I love that we're able to help our suppliers to bring that breadth of selection to market."

Schnitzer said he's also interested in learning more about the thinking that goes into product design in housewares.

"There are a lot of incredibly thoughtful and smart people who have been working in this industry for years designing the most effective products," he said. "It's a personal mission to uncover that design thinking to make sure we are portraying those products in the best possible light to our end customer and helping that end customer understand what is differentiating about this particular item and who is it the right item for."

Wayfair counts on its suppliers to help it keep in touch with trends in design and home fashion. The larger trends in housewares and the immediate approach to operations Wayfair pursues should eventually dovetail in what the consumer experiences on the site.

"We try to be as in touch with those kind of macro-level trends that our suppliers are seeing as possible," Schnitzer said. "We want to have conversations around: 'Help us understand how this affects you. Our main focus is making sure that the customer experience is one that is best in class, and so whatever we can do together to make sure we are promoting a best customer experience is what we want to do. The core of a lot of those conversations is around resourcing and being able to react quickly to change. The quicker we can adapt to change, the better the experience for the customer and the more we all win. So that resourcing from both a strategic level but also from a tactical level is very important for us.'" **HWB**



Wayfair has grown its tabletop assortment, including with new collections such as Foundstone.

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Robinson Home Serves Up CraftKitchen Expansion

BUFFALO, NY— Robinson Home Products will debut several new additions to its CraftKitchen branded assortment, in time for spring entertaining.

Among the new offerings are new wooden and slate serving boards. The acacia wood serving boards are available in a two-piece 11-inch round board with cheese knife set, as well as a large serving board. The slate boards are available in a medium and large sizes and feature felt bottoms. The larger sized board also comes with jute handles.

To accompany the new serving boards, Robinson Home has rolled out various cheese knives and accessories. Sets include knives designed for a variety of soft and hard cheeses, as well as assorted spreaders that can be used for spreads and dips.

New to its kitchenware assortment is a wide array of kitchen tools and gadgets designed for making food prep easier for the home cook and baker. New kitchen tools include a nylon turner, meat mallet, measuring spoons, measuring cups, whisk and a bar board. The company also included a silicone spatula basket to corral kitchen tools.

In addition, the company has added to its baking-specific tools, adding small and large scoops for cookie dough, a large cookie turner, acacia wood rolling pin, pastry cutter and a silicone baking mat.

The company will also showcase the new ExactEdge cutlery system, introduced earlier this year. It is a self-sharpening system that guides the knife into place at the correct angle, removing the guesswork associated with knife maintenance. Each ExactEdge block also includes a steel magnetic strip that captures the shavings.

The 13-piece block sets are available in acacia wood and a gray rubberwood. The cutlery options available include an ergonomically designed acacia wood handle and high carbon stainless steel handle. All blades are high carbon stainless steel and feature a double bevel cutting edge. The ExactEdge cutlery blocks are available in a stainless steel handle set and acacia wood handle set. **HWB**



ABOVE: Robinson Home's CraftKitchen slate serving board.

RIGHT: CraftKitchen's four-piece cheese knife set.



Cocktail Culture Inspires Bormioli Luigi Glassware

NEW YORK— As consumers continue to try their hand at homemade cocktails and elevate their knowledge of wine, the Bormioli Luigi Corp. is offering up its latest specialty glassware from the Bormioli Rocco and Luigi Bormioli brands, designed to support such activities.

The Bormioli Rocco brand is introducing the America '20s collection this year, which has a focus on specialty glasses with a design inspired by the jazz age of the 1920's. The glasses have a retro glamour appeal, said the company, and includes gin tonic, cocktail, martini, cocktail coupe, cooler and a double old fashioned.

The company is also adding on to its signature Ypsilon pattern, with the Ypsilon Wine extension. The introduction adds three new sizes of an updated carafe and is designed for pouring wines, table water and juices. The company said the new design has softer lines than the more edgy Ypsilon carafes.

Also updated is the Quattro Stagioni storage and preserving collection, which includes five new sizes, including three large storage options with wide mouth openings, and two mini sizes for spices, small pieces/parts and jams and jellies.

The brand also introduced a new Easy glass mixing bowl, which is available in four sizes. It is made of opal glass.

Luigi Bormioli is also releasing new drinkware including Bach extensions, which round out the line by including modern mixology pieces in a paneled pattern. The new shapes include the Spanish gin glass, shot, Retro fizz and cocktail glass. **HWB**

Housewares/Shelter

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such as task-purposed stools and office sets also have seen significant sales gains, he added.

Target reported that from mid-March it experienced a strong surge in traffic and sales, with category mix heavily concentrated in the essentials and food/beverage categories. In the same timeframe, sales growth also emerged within the hardlines that support in-home activities, including home office and entertainment, while performance softened meaningfully in apparel/accessories.

Marshal Cohen, chief retail analyst for The NPD Group, said retail sales growth of small appliances during the week ending March 7 indicates a consumer focus on cooking and cleaning.

"This is likely to continue as these products offer assistance with living a socially distant and healthy lifestyle," Cohen said.

The Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM) urged government officials to include home appliance production, distribution, retailing and servicing among "essential businesses" to maintain safe, sanitary and otherwise necessary operations of residences.

Joseph McGuire, AHAM president and CEO, said, "Home appliances, such as ranges and ovens, refrigerators, air cleaners, personal care products, humidifiers and floor care appliances are necessary and essential to the wellbeing and safety of people in their homes. This means that Americans need access to appliances, and to servicing, as needed, for these critical items."

Holly Bohn, vp of Thinkspace Brands, a marketer of home and office workspace organizers, expects the work-from-home surge to create opportunities for home organization suppliers with diversified supply bases prepared to fulfill increasing demand.

"People are at home, they want to get organized and need a functional home office, so storage and office are actually strong," Bohn said. "We've heard from retailers that some manufacturers have not been able to fill orders, and we were able to step in and get those retailers product for important times, such as back to school."

A survey by Coresight Research reveals consumers believe changes in their behavior prompted by the coronavirus outbreak would extend beyond the pandemic. In the survey, conducted March 17 and 18 as restrictions to gatherings and movement were taking hold in the U.S., 47.4% of consumers said they expect to continue with changes to their shopping behaviors made during the outbreak even after it subsides, especially when it comes to more hygienic practices and a focus on health and wellness.

On the health and wellness appliance front, Katie Sotor, vp of humidifier supplier Crane, noted that the Center for Disease Control recommends use of humidifiers as one of the ways to relieve coronavirus symptoms, including nasal congestion, dry cough and sore throat. **HWB**

Mike Duff and Peter Giannetti contributed to this article.



To our valued readers:

This is a challenging time for everyone.

The home and housewares business, despite its vast scope and scale, remains a close-knit community of companies of all sizes united in the goal to make everyday life more pleasant. That has never been a worthier mission than it is now.

The HomeWorld Business team is focused on the safety and health of its staff and their families, along with the personal wellbeing of our business partners and the people of the industry we serve.

We also understand business must find a way to persevere.

The HomeWorld Business team has been working from their homes with no interruption in our delivery of timely content vital to the industry's operation and planning during this crisis.

The HomeWorldBusiness.com website and e-newsletters provide constant updates on industry and retailing news, the continuing stream of new product introductions and other important developments.

And with so many of our readers also working from their homes, we're making a digital version of our current print edition easier to access and view for free through the HomeWorldBusiness.com website.

We will overcome challenges together by harnessing the resolute, supportive and caring spirit that is, and always has been, a hallmark of the home and housewares business.

Stay safe.

Sincerely,
The HomeWorld Business Team



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