

HOMEWORLD[®]

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Overstock & At Home: Cases In Rapid Retail Evolution

NEW YORK— The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated change across retailers as they strive to support consumers, whether it be the rapid increase in e-commerce, the roll out of new omnichannel programs or the transformation of home assortments.

In this issue, HomeWorld Business looks at the case of two distinct retailers— At Home's home décor superstores and Overstock's pure play e-commerce platform— as they look to develop future growth strategies.

Overstock made a pivot not long ago and, David Nielsen, the company's president, said it was making progress on revitalizing its retail operation (story, page 6).

At Home is rolling out the Grace Mitchell Collection in a partnership that builds off earlier initiatives but with this one representing a new milestone as it undertakes building an exclusive brand that will develop over time (story, page 8).

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Tabletop Market Returns To New York With Hybrid Format

BY LAUREN DEBELLIS
Senior Editor

NEW YORK— As the 2020 fall New York Tabletop Market kicks off, as a hybrid event that will lean heavily on its digital components, what typically makes for a festive and productive industry gathering will no doubt look and feel quite different this year due to continued COVID-19 restrictions.

While some of the permanent showrooms at Forty One Madison, located in New York City, will remain open and accept in-person appointments, several showrooms will be closed and instead, attendees will experience virtual showrooms, found on the new digital show hub, hosted on the 41Madison.com website.

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Made by Gather teams Crux kitchen electrics brand with Ghetto Gastro.

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“These products are built to make things fun in the kitchen.”

—Chef Andrew Rea,
“Binging With Babish”

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Dine & Entertain

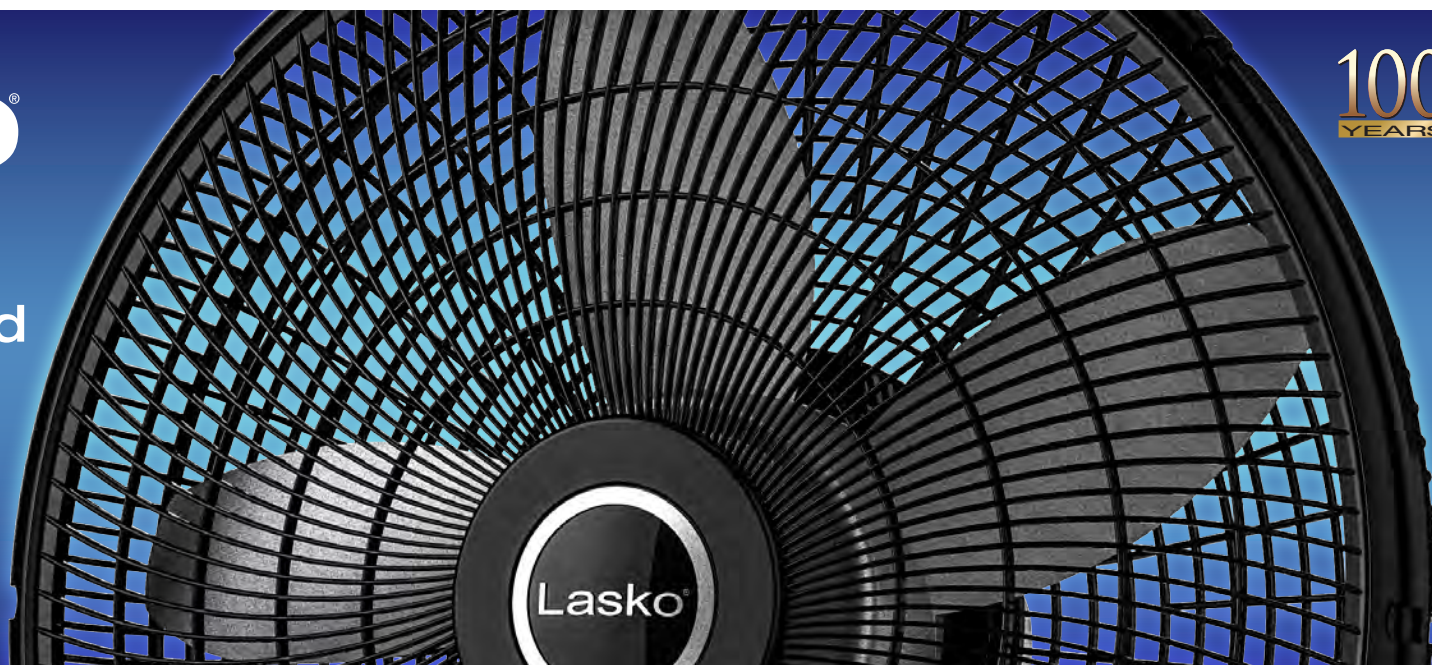
TTU brings Dolly Parton lifestyle collection to market. **Page 20**



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"We want to be known as the brand that provides a more comfortable and healthy home environment," Ed Vlachich, CEO of Lasko, told HOMEWORLD BUSINESS® as he discussed the company's new heater and air purifier initiatives.

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Pandemic Propels Overstock's Home-Oriented Position

By MIKE DUFF
Executive Editor

MIDVALE, UT— Overstock made a pivot not long ago and, David Nielsen, the company's president, told HOMEWORLD BUSINESS®, was making progress on revitalizing its retail operation. And when COVID-19 began to break out across the country, the home-oriented position the company had established in the market energized the organization and its sales.

At the same time, the pandemic allowed Overstock to double down on a strategy to differentiate its retail business and focus on a specific consumer base, which, he said, positions the company to benefit from longer term trends likely to emerge from present market conditions.

Although Overstock covers a number of product categories, home furnishings and housewares are bedrock businesses, and consumers buying to improve their homes in the coronavirus crisis accelerated what was a gradual if steady improvement into a major turnaround event.

As April ended, Overstock posted a net loss of \$16.3 million for the first quarter ended March 31 versus a loss of



"Getting customers to come back to us was part of the strategy going into 2020."

—David Nielsen,
Overstock

\$39.2 million, in the year-before period, beating a Wall Street estimate, as net revenue came in at \$351.6 million.

In early 2019, Overstock had decided to abandon a strategy of tolerating losses initiated in 2018 to build market share. However, Overstock

strategic shifts hurt gross merchandise volume, that measure of the total sales generated through the retail business, which came in at 21% lower for fiscal 2019.

However, leadership changes and a renewed focus on the retail business helped Overstock gain some traction. From January 1 to March 12, losses eased, with company GMV down 6%. Things really took off after the March 13 declaration of a coronavirus-related national state of emergency. From the period from March 13 to 31, GMV increased by 20% and, in April, by 132%.

After narrowing losses in the first quarter, Overstock turned to profits in the second. Net income in the period was \$36.4 million, or 84 cents per diluted share, versus a net loss of \$24.7 million, or 69 cents per diluted share, in the year-earlier quarter.

As the pandemic intensified during the first half of 2020, Overstock already was on the mend, Nielsen said.

"We were already in the middle of seeing some real progress and tracking toward our plan," he said.

Then, consumers began changing purchasing behavior to help them cope with the conditions faced during stay at home requirements meant to mitigate the disease impact, which put Overstock in a position to meet emerging needs.

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Crux, Ghetto Gastro Energize Culinary Concept

By PETER GIANNETTI
Editor-in-Chief

NEW YORK— Made by Gather has teamed its Crux kitchen electrics brand with Ghetto Gastro, a Bronx, NY-born culinary collective, to launch with Williams Sonoma an exclusive collaboration of boldly designed, premium small appliances positioned against a theme of advancing social justice through food.

Ghetto Gastro is a collective of top chefs and thought leaders who utilize food to empower communities and advance social justice by igniting conversations around race, class and inclusion.

A collection of CRUXGG electrics is



set to roll out this month at Williams Sonoma stores and on Williams-Sonoma.com.

Crux and Ghetto Gastro members Jon Gray, Lester Walker and Pierre Serrão began to conceptualize a

FROM LEFT: Ghetto Gastro's Lester Walker, Jon Gray and Pierre Serrao teamed with Made by Gather's Shae Hong for the CRUXGG kitchen electrics collection.

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The Start Of A Holiday Season Like No Other

THE START OF THE fourth quarter for the housewares business finds hopeful anticipation that sales will remain strong mixing with lingering uncertainty about how consumers will shop and spend ahead of the holidays.

The pandemic recalibrated the usual annual housewares shopping cycle by driving unexpectedly steep gains earlier in the year. Fourth quarter sales, inventory, and promotional projections made before the coronavirus struck likely had to be adjusted on the fly without a comparable sales history to guide the adjustments.

Key Questions

Key questions remain. Will the fact that consumers have gobbled up so many housewares products already during pandemic mitigate holiday sales volumes? Will inventory shortages shortchange holiday growth? Can retailers make up, online or otherwise, for a potentially steep decline in holiday in-store traffic, especially on Black Friday and the ensuing week-end?

Such unknowns, despite signs housewares will continue robust growth, won't be answered until all the presents are unwrapped.



At that point, the industry should have a clearer picture to begin mapping out plans for 2021 confidently. Barring a second wave of severe disruption, it will be a vital turning point for an industry whose pandemic-fueled growth often seemed more transactional than inspirational.

Retailers have turned everywhere for goods to fulfill surging, impulsive housewares demand. It has felt at times as if retailers were focused less on why specific products should be selected over others and more on how fast suppliers could ship whatever they had.

While that dynamic might continue to some extent, the next phase of the pandemic shopping cycle should see a revival of more carefully considered consumer purchasing. And that should encourage more carefully considered retail assorting.

Competitive Distinctions

For retailers, it's an opportunity to reassess the selectivity with which they curate assortments. For suppliers, it's a chance to recommit to development and promotion of their competitive distinctions.

Demonstrably innovative and

differentiated product and service will attract consumers who have waited to re-equip their homes or are looking already for extensions and upgrades to items bought earlier this year out of urgent necessity. Retailers and vendors should reset and reengage around offering consumers a more fulfilling experience and enduring value to go with in-stock availability and competitive pricing.

Welcome Consolation

That this pandemic drove an unexpected, early rush for housewares was a welcome consolation to the hardship and heartache of the past several months. If it's cause for optimism at the start of the fourth quarter, it's still anyone's guess exactly how consumers will shop and spend the next several weeks... and at what level the opportunity for housewares during this critical period remains untapped.

Whatever the answers, the close of a holiday season that will play out like no holiday season before it should bring some clarity to the lingering uncertainty about how to plan for what's next.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Lasko Expands U.S. Production With New Heaters

BY DONNA BOYLE SCHWARTZ
Contributing Editor

WEST CHESTER, PA— Lasko Products is making a major statement in home environment products this fall, launching a new line of made-in-the-USA Cyclonic Digital Ceramic Heaters as well as debuting an expanded selection of consumer air purifiers.

“We want to be known as the brand that provides a more comfortable and healthy home environment,” Ed Vlacich, CEO of Lasko, told HOMEWORLD BUSINESS®. “We’re very excited about expanding our product portfolio. What we have learned during the pandemic, as an essential business, is that we need to be there for our

customers and our consumers when they need us, with the products that they need at that time.”

He added, “For example,

Lasko’s new Cyclonic digital heaters are manufactured in the U.S.

with consumers now staying and working at home, they are using more rooms, and therefore they have a greater need for supplemental heating and cooling. Our retail partners have experienced strong demand for portable cooling throughout the past six months, and now, they are experiencing strong demand for supplemental heating.”

Lasko can respond quickly to increases in demand due to the company’s three domestic facilities, totaling some 2.5 million square feet of manufacturing and warehousing space.

“The benefit to domestic manufacturing is that it allows us to respond to sudden changes in demand, often due to sudden changes in the weather,” Vlacich noted. “Most manufacturers who are doing business overseas face a three-to-four month lead time; our domestic manufacturing gives us a strong marketplace advantage.”

Vlacich noted that major weather events, such as hurricanes in the South and East and wildfires in the Western states, typically cause sharp spikes in demand, and Lasko’s domestic facilities position the company to react quickly with the appropriate products.

“U.S. production substantially decreases the lead time from factory

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Collapse-It Debuts Steamer Lineup On QVC

VISTA, CA— Centurion Global has debuted its new Collapse-It Steamers exclusively on QVC. The new steamers serve dual purpose as collapsible storage containers and are scheduled to launch at retail in October.

According to the company, the Collapse-It Steamers feature a steamer insert that enables home cooks to steam their vegetables in the microwave or oven. The containers, like the entire Collapse-It range of storage containers, collapses flat and can be stacked for ease of storage.

The new steamers are available in a seven cup sizes and come with the steamer insert and lid.

The entire Collapse-It line is made of food-safe silicone and is designed to be stored in the freezer and heated in the



oven or microwave as needed. Each lid serves a dual purpose as it can be depressed to push the vent in order to remove excess air and vacuum seal ingredients for freshness. In addition, the vent can be opened in order to reheat or steam foods in the microwave or oven.

The Collapse-It line of food storage containers is available in a wide range of sizes, from one cup to seven cups, in both square and round shapes. The containers are also available in a variety of colors and sold individually and in sets. The line is also available in an 18-piece CDU that includes three pieces of each size container. [HWS](#)

ABOVE: Centurion has added a steamer insert to its Collapse-It storage assortment.

LEFT: The Collapse-It line is available in both square and round shapes.

At Home Builds Mitchell Collection As Exclusive Brand

BY MIKE DUFF
Executive Editor

PLANO, TX— At Home is rolling out the Grace Mitchell Collection in a partnership that builds off earlier initiatives but with this one representing a new milestone as it undertakes building an exclusive brand that will develop over time.

The collaboration that At Home has established with interior designer Mitchell is already vast, at 400 items, and meant to last, as the two parties refine their work together across categories from furniture to home decor to lighting to textiles to tabletop.

Mitchell, who in addition to doing her A Storied Style blog, has been featured in several HGTV shows including “One



At Home has teamed with interior designer Grace Mitchell.

of a Kind” and “Design at Your Door,” is working in collaboration with a retailer for the first time.

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Furnish

Home & Workspace



Sauder Puts Design Focus On Homebound Lifestyles

BY MIKE DUFF
Executive Editor

ARCHBOLD, OH— For some time, Sauder Woodworking has been developing new approaches to home furnishings that meet requirements generated by changing consumer lifestyles, with the needs of younger consumers and others confronting space challenges areas of focus. The result of its efforts is evident in the products it is featuring for the fall High Point Market season.

Now, Sauder's focus continues to develop on-trend and functional furniture solutions for customers who are also spending more time at home. Introductions include collections under the new Soho designation and several new contemporary collections featuring metal/wood mixed material combinations and a variety of finishes.

As developed, each of the five new Sauder collections takes a unique approach to addressing consumer needs as they have continued to evolve

despite, or because of, COVID-19 pandemic-related disruption.

Under Soho office, according to Sauder, the Aspen Post collection arrives with a welcoming, natural character that is typical of farmhouse design. The line includes desk, lateral file, hutch and cabinet pieces in a prime oak finish accented by black, rustic drawer and door handles.

The Soho office Englewood collection is inspired by mid-century modern design and blended with clean contract styling. It consists of credenzas, hutches, lateral files, utility stands and desk options including double pedestal, executive and L varieties, all clad in a spiced mahogany finish and embellished by slat molding details.

In terms of mixed material collections, New Hyde offers slim, sturdy ladder-inspired construction in modular pieces that attach to walls as space-saving solutions. The product line, in a serene walnut finish paired with a black powder-coated metal framing, incorporates a desk, bookcase



ABOVE: Sauder's Center City bar cabinet in neutral champagne oak finish.

LEFT: The company's Soho office Englewood line includes an L desk with hutch.

with lower closed storage, bookcase with lower drawers, credenza TV stand and an entryway storage organizer that also could function as an open closet anywhere in a home.

Market Commons, which sports rich walnut and slate gray finish combinations, combines open architecture in mixed materials to deliver an uncommon value in chic industrial design, Sauder noted. The product line ranges from coffee and end tables to a bookcase and L-desk to a TV stand.

In a neutral woodgrain champagne oak finish, the Center City collection arrives in a casual contemporary styling based on a less is more aesthetic. The satin taupe metal legs and bases have a sculptural quality, Sauder asserted, while geometric perforated metal panels add visual interest across a product line that includes a two-door accent storage cabinet/bar with open storage and semi-closed behind the two perforated metal doors. **HWB**

Dorel Addresses Emerging Consumer Home Trends

WESTMOUNT, QUEBEC— Dorel Industries, in the Fall High Point Market timeframe, is highlighting new and trending products throughout their various brands developed to address emerging lifestyle needs of consumers whose embrace of home life has become even more profound in the pandemic.

As they work and play more at home, consumers are looking for furnishings that help them engage in satisfying activities but also in developing a personally more appealing environment where they can relax and feel comforted.

In its Ameriwood Home operation, Dorel is introducing Augusta in time for Fall High Point Market season.

In its approach to market season, Ameriwood emphasized that how consumers shape, celebrate, decorate and furnish their homes is a more important consideration than it has ever been, with home improvement and DIY projects on the rise. Given that, Ameriwood is launching the Augusta collection with affordable on-trend design that is relevant to current lifestyles.

With a relaxed, mixed materials industrial farmhouse design, Augusta offers an informal look with enough industrial edge to make it consistent

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Dorel's Ameriwood Augusta living room line has a farmhouse design style.

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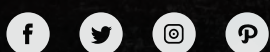
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South Shore Introduces Home Office ‘Workplace’ Collections

SAINTE-CROIX, QUEBEC— South Shore Furniture is introducing a new line of office products for the Fall High Point Market season that incorporate a range of value features including height adjustability.

Furniture in the South Shore Workplace product line will include power bars, cord multifunctionality and other features included to help people working from home manage better, the company stated, even in small spaces. South Shore designed Workplace to meet ANSI/BIFMA performance standards for small and home offices. Suggested retail product prices across the collections range from \$199.99 to \$799.99.

The five collections in the Workplace line mix various furniture pieces including computer desks, unique L-desks and storage pieces in addition to tri-height adjustable desks that let users switch from sitting to standing as might suit different task needs.

Two collections, the Helsey and Kozak, have the same basic components, a desk, an L-desk with open and closed storage, an adjustable height desk, a mobile file on casters, a lateral file and a credenza, in various styles. The Helsey collection focuses on efficiency for professionals and entrepreneurs in a look that is Scandinavian inspired. The basic desk offers three drawers and angled legs as support. The collection comes in two finish options, soft elm and white, and natural walnut and black. The adjustable desk comes in a natural walnut and matte black finish and all white.

The Kozak collection, developed with professionals in mind, features spacious surfaces in a trendy contemporary look. The basic desk is single pedestal. Finishes are gray oak and soft elm and black.

The Talie collection sports a Bohemian look in silhouettes that are just traditional enough to make the furniture suitable for those who have to host client meetings but fashionable enough to give a workspace some style. It includes a double pedestal desk, an adjustable height desk, a credenza and a movable file. Finishes are natural walnut and faux printed rattan, although the adjustable height desk is natural walnut and black.

In a contemporary eclectic look, the Zelia collection takes artists as its inspiration combining high and low storage in an L-desk that provides abundant work surface for monitors and other necessary tools. The collection also offers a double pedestal desk, an adjustable height desk, a mobile file, a lateral file cabinet and a credenza. It comes in a soft elm and soft elm and steel blue finish options.

Designed with emphasis on ergonomics, the Majyta collection is designed for comfort and ease of use in a straightforward modern design. The collection consists of an adjustable height desk in three finishes, white, soft elm and black, and natural walnut and black.

South Shore developed many pieces in the collection to work in tandem and so create closely organized workstations that offer a range of options in use. **HWB**



Prepac's Jim Mathison said they are aiming to have the new factory operational in 2021.

Prepac Developing North Carolina Furniture Factory

VANCOUVER— When Prepac Manufacturing, which is based in British Columbia, announced in August that it would open a new Guilford County, NC, factory, the ready-to-assemble furniture maker didn't mean for the wait for product to roll out of the facility to be a long one, and so it is moving to get things done.

“Our goal is to have the new factory operational in February 2021. We have building upgrades to complete and a lot of new equipment to install over the next five months,” said Prepac president Jim Mathison.

The company will invest \$27.1 million in the new 260,000 square foot factory and apply the money in such a way as to ramp up effectively.

“Our plans are to be producing our full range of products within 18 to 24 months,” he said.

Guilford County, and specifically the town of Whitsett, proved attractive for several reasons including the availability of a skilled workforce, easy access to major markets and compelling state and county resources that helped ensure the project's success given the current uncertain times. Then there's the ability to ship effectively in a period when logistics are an increasingly important furniture industry factor.

“Distribution of manufacturing across North America is very important given that shipping costs have a considerable impact on retail pricing for lower cost, larger products such as furniture,” Mathison said.

As suggested, the COVID-19 pandemic loomed over the Whitsett project both in terms of complications and opportunities created.

“Prepac has been shipping products directly to end consumers on behalf of our retailer partners for more than 20 years,” Mathison said. “Our East Coast expansion planning started several years ago and, while COVID-19 will certainly make it more challenging to open a new facility, we believe it will accelerate consumer e-commerce purchasing trends.”

To support the project, North Carolina's Economic Investment Committee approved a Job Development Investment Grant that will help facilitate plant construction. It provides for potential reimbursement of up to \$2.1 million spread over 12 years based on Prepac's meeting goals including incremental job creation. As Prepac Manufacturing chose a site in Guilford County, the company's JDIG agreement also calls for moving as much as \$234,000 into the state's Industrial Development Fund Utility Account, which helps rural communities finance necessary infrastructure upgrades to attract future business. **HWB**



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OSP Home Develops New Designs For Home Office Space

ONTARIO, CA— Although High Point Market season isn't what it usually is, OSP Home has developed new products in a hot category, home office, to satisfy the needs of the times.

The Modern Life L Desk with Charging Tray and associated accessory pieces and the Contempo L Desk, with its own accompanying accessory, arrive sporting clean lines and modern design elements but also, in the one case, a touch of gold glamor and, in the other, a coastal/cottage aspect. They can suit a range of today's interior design trends and add a fresh, light feel to smaller spaces.

The Modern Life L Desk offers an innovative power tray that offers easy access to built-in power and charging, OSP Home stated. Finish options for the desk include a current matte white or black laminate. Powder coated gold metal legs provide a color accent, while the desk is fast and easy to put together with desk top pre-assembled. The desk has a complementary credenza/bookcase and utility cabinet available.

The Contempo L Desk, with its 56-inch by 48-inch total top surface, comes in a white oak or an Ozark ash finish with woodgrain touches supported, respectively, by white and black metal frames. The design of the desk accommodates a matching mobile file cabinet with open storage and a file drawer. The steel frame construction provides durability and style.

Both desks are available to ship. Suggested retail price for the Modern Life L Desk is \$595 while SRP for the associated storage cabinet is \$312, as it is for the credenza/bookcase. Suggested retail price for the Contempo L Desk is \$229 with the suggested retail price on the mobile file cabinet set at \$270. **HWB**

ABOVE: **OSP Home's Modern Life L desk with charging tray.**

BELOW: **The Contempo L desk with matching mobile file cabinet.**



Greentouch Introduces Laminate Electric Fireplace Mantels

MOORESVILLE, NC— Although the Fall High Point Market may be limited by the COVID-19 pandemic, Greentouch Home continues to develop fresh products to meet the demands of the marketplace.

Greentouch is introducing three new laminate electric fireplace mantels with Bluetooth and sound bars. Each mantel comes in three finishes, which works out to nine new models all of which will be ready to ship shortly from the company's Chicago-area warehouse, according to the company. They also are available in the Greentouch mixed container program as is the case with the company's other electric fireplace furniture.

Each of the three designs, the Lovell, Monterey and Redmond, accommodates flat panel televisions up to 80 inches, takes a 28-inch infrared electric fireplace insert and has a black base and hardware.

Of the three products, the Lovell mantel comes in at 60 inches wide by 15.5 inches deep by 28.75 inches high. The Lovell has two doors with soft close hardware and adjustable levelers. Finishes are walnut, gray oak and black oak.

Dimensions for the Monterey mantel are 56 inches wide by 15.5 inches deep by 31 inches high. The Monterey mounts two doors with soft close hardware and

adjustable shelves. Finishes are walnut, gray oak and white oak.

The Redmond dimensions are 60 inches wide by 15.5 inches deep by 25.75 inches high. It also mounts two doors with soft close hardware and adjustable shelves. Finishes are walnut, gray oak and black oak. **HWB**

ABOVE: **Greentouch's Lovell (top) and Monterey electric fireplaces can fit flat panel televisions.**

BELOW: **The Redmond unit features doors and adjustable shelves.**



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Twin Star Highlights Electric Fireplaces, Outdoor Furniture

HIGH POINT, NC— Twin Star Home is getting ready for the Fall High Point Market season by focusing on electric fireplace furniture, including its CoolGlow product line, and the outdoor furniture it offers under the recently acquired TK Classics brand.

The Twin Star Home media mantel with ClassicFlame CoolGlow electric fireplace model 42MM67211-B335 arrives in a Buxton brown finish on birch veneer finished with antique black hardware. It accommodates most flat screen TVs up to 80 inches and 90 pounds and incorporates a full upper media shelf. Two glass-front side cabinets have slow close hinges and one adjustable shelf each.

The 3D infrared electric fireplace with CoolGlow fan feature is fit for all weather, Twin Star indicated. A two-in-one heater and fan delivers year-round temperature control. The infrared quartz electric fireplace delivers warmth with a 5,200 BTU heater that provides supplemental heating for up to 1,000 square feet of space while a four-speed oscillating fan, which can be set directionally or for constant air movement, delivers a cool breeze. An adjustable digital thermostat allows users to determine room warmth.

Patent pending 3D flame effect

technology provides a layered flame effect that creates a realistic-looking fire with five adjustable brightness and speed settings, and the tempered glass-front display mounts a traditional log set and ember bed. The flame effect operates even when the heater and fan are turned off. Patent-pending Safer Plug fire prevention technology monitors the temperature at the connection to prevent electrical fire, circuit or product damage. Suggested retail price for the CoolGlow electric fireplace is \$1,299.

The Morado Bay media mantel, SRP \$1,249, sports a Fillmore oak finish and

accommodates TVs up to 80 inches and 155 pounds. Two side cabinets conceal one adjustable shelf each while pass-through holes provide ventilation and easy wire management. A tempered glass-front display includes a mirrored back panel and contemporary, black tray with clear crystals.

A 42-inch 3D infrared quartz electric fireplace contains the patent pending 3D layered flame effect technology with the five adjustable brightness, color and speed settings. The media mantel provides supplemental zone warming up to 1,000 square feet, with its own 5,200 BTU capacity controlled by an adjustable digital thermostat. And the unit incorporates the Safer Plug, while the flame effect operates without the heater needing to be on.

An optional integrated Bluetooth speaker kit fits the piece out to provide TV sound and stream audio from anywhere in a room. Patent-pending fire prevention technology monitors the temperature of the connection to prevent electrical fire, circuit or product damage.

On the TK Classics side, the River Brook 7-piece patio dining set, part of the Kathy Ireland Homes & Gardens by TK Classics line, includes six chairs and a choice of 12 different cushion options. Handwoven resin wicker in a rich walnut complements a rust-resistant powder coated aluminum frame and tabletop, which has an umbrella hole in the center. SRP is \$957.

Each of the featured products is available now. **HWB**

Twin Star's TK Classics River Brook patio dining set includes six chairs.



LumiSource Styles Tania Accent Chair For Fall

ELK GROVE VILLAGE, IL— LumiSource has added a new accent chair for the Fall High Point Market season that clearly is a soft touch.

The Tania accent chair comes clad in a velvet fabric and four colorations: blush, black, champagne and silver. The gold legs provide a glam styling touch while the seat and back have a classic tufted look.

The Tania seat dimensions are 27 inches long by 30 inches wide by 29 inches high. Suggested retail price is \$299. Assembly only requires screwing on the legs, LumiSource noted.

The company's featuring of the Tania chair follows up on its showcasing of the Folio Collection in the Summer Las Vegas Market timeframe, which also offers glam looks at affordable prices.

The collection features two workstations that offer clean, modern lines, the Folia Contemporary Desk in gold metal and white wood and the Folia Contemporary Corner Desk in gold metal and white wood. Each can function in large or small room settings depending on need while still offering a work surface, at 45 inches wide or 43 inches wide, respectively, that's big enough to be fully functional.

To accompany the two workstations, or even to stand alone, the Folio Contemporary Bookcase is a full 49.25 inches high. Suggested retail prices in the Folio Collection range from \$149.99 to \$169.99. **HWB**



LumiSource's Tania accent chair comes in a velvet fabric available in four colors.

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Lamps Plus Reaches New Audience With Twitch Platform

LOS ANGELES— As retailers look for new ways to reach consumers, Lamps Plus has developed a partnership with Twitch streamer Katie Ruvalcaba as a way to boost the company's awareness among a new audience and capitalize on live-streaming.

The promotion puts Lamps Plus in front of an audience outside the home furnishings space. Ruvalcaba, in her MrsRuvi stream, is a global English-language Top 15 Food & Drink streamer on Amazon's Twitchglobal, which launched Food & Drink in 2018 among its IRL, or In Real Life, entertainment categories.

Lamps Plus cited research indicating that the Twitch Food & Drink category has grown almost 40% in viewers and hours watched since July 2019.

A food related show might not seem like the place to promote furnishings, but Angela Hsu, Lamps Plus svp/marketing and e-commerce, pointed out that kitchen lighting and the furnishings that go along with serving up food are categories that are key to Lamps Plus. Ruvalcaba emerged as the right Twitch streamer to help Lamps Plus explore the new medium.

"Our primary focus for influencer marketing is Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube, so Twitch was entirely new for us," she said. "We found MrsRuvi just by being on Twitch and seeing Katie's livestream. She was extremely engaging. We loved her enthusiasm and persona, and the lively way she interacted with her family and chat audience."

Lamps Plus sponsored all three of Ruvalcaba's four-hour streams from

July 27 to 31 with website branding in titles and on a background signboard. As part of the show, Ruvalcaba pointed out three new 360 Lighting brand LED under cabinet lights from Lamps Plus that she had installed in her kitchen.

"A benefit of partnering with a Twitch streamer for us is generating brand awareness with a new audience and being aligned with a fun, entertaining content creator," Hsu said.

It's not only the numbers but circumstances that made Twitch attractive to the retailer.

"Twitch has had record growth during the pandemic with people spending more time at home," Hsu said. "We wanted to broaden our reach with a larger audience. The challenge was finding a streaming partner to reach the right Twitch audience. In the Food & Drink category, we saw an opportunity to work with a cooking streamer on kitchen lighting. When we viewed Katie Ruvalcaba's channel, MrsRuvi, we realized she could be an ideal partner."

The MrsRuvi channel has an estimated 40% female viewer audience average with a prominence in 25 to 42 year olds among the 11,300 followers Ruvalcaba identifies, Lamps Plus noted. In comparison, Twitch has a 35% female and 73% 16 to 34 year old average audience, the retailer pointed out, citing Business of Apps. In her mid-30s with a family and home that feature in the streams, Ruvalcaba and her audience are a closer match to the company's typical shopper demographic than the average Twitch viewer.

"We're always looking for new ways to

connect our brand to consumers," Hsu said. "We have invested in influencer partnerships with a focus on Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube where we've achieved great success in generating sales and engagements. We're always interested to explore and test new channels, including Twitch. Instead of launching a large campaign, we started with MrsRuvi because we think our brand is more likely to resonate with her audience."

Of course, Lamps Plus had to create advertising to suit the Twitch format, and Ruvalcaba helped out.

"We brainstormed with MrsRuvi to figure out what made sense for her audience and adjusted accordingly. Since they installed the under-cabinet lighting themselves, it naturally came through as part of the story," Hsu said.

At the same time, Lamps Plus had to consider the Twitch channel. As other formats are becoming increasingly sophisticated, Twitch maintains a homemade approach.

"Twitch is a lot different than broadcast TV and even the content YouTube creators are making, which often uses editing, scripts, professional lighting and sound," Hsu said. "You come to expect a different approach after browsing Twitch. Most Twitch streamers are using a mounted web camera with existing household lighting and improvising to fill hours while responding to their chat audience. There's no script, but there is an authentic person talking to an interested audience. MrsRuvi has a dedicated chat audience that shows up for every stream, and they were excited for her to have sponsorship. All that made it a great environment."

Lamps Plus recognized that prior experiences it had with relatively new marketing sectors could be brought to bear on Twitch.

"The approach was similar to how we work with influencers," Hsu said, "in that we worked with her to provide product and gave brand insight but also encouraged creative freedom because we wanted to show their authenticity and offer content that will be successful with her audience."

Another factor that went into consideration was the potential to leverage existing relationships.

"Lamps Plus sells on Amazon marketplace so they're a key partner. We expect a large percentage of Twitch users are Amazon Prime customers and are great customers for our brand," Hsu said. **HWB**

Dorel

continued from page 10

with modern aesthetics. Ameriwood enhanced the look with design details in side panels and decorative hardware. Augusta launched in one of Ameriwood's newest finishes, reclaimed oak. In essence, an on-trend take on a rustic finish, reclaimed oak provides lighter wood tones with low gloss and texture.

The Augusta collection includes bedroom and living room pieces, many of which have multifunction dimensions. Not long from now, entertaining at home will be the norm again, it added, but with a focus not on Instagrammable tablescapes and fussy preparations, but, rather on small gatherings, community, conversation and togetherness.

The Augusta collection anticipates upcoming needs with casual style and many pieces that serve double duty. The dresser can stand in for a dining room buffet, for example, and the bar suits cocktail, movie night or coffee service functions. In addition, an open storage end table or extra wide nightstand can fit into a living or bedroom. To address consumer feedback as to getting overwhelmed assembling large pieces of furniture, Ameriwood has made Augusta furniture simpler to put together with side panels pre-assembled complete with the legs and decorative moldings. Also, for the bedroom items such as dressers, the drawer glides are affixed to the side walls.

In Dorel's Cosco division, key new items include a number that provide consumers alternatives to approaching household activities. For instance, the Folding Laptop Activity Tray, black with cup and electronic device holder is an adjustable and portable mini table that allows consumers to use a laptop or tablet at multiple viewing angles. The molded cup and electronic device holder make it even more versatile in support of anything from reading a book to eating a meal.

Meanwhile, the XL 38.5-inch fold-in-half card table with handle in black is a portable indoor/outdoor piece that is wheelchair accessible. With a resin design, it can function as anything from a dinnertime sideboard to a camping table to a tailgate buffet to a crafting workstation. **HWB**

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Dine & Entertain

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TTU has teamed with Dolly Parton (left) on a lifestyle collection, which includes tableware.

TTU Brings Dolly Parton Lifestyle Collection To Market

BY LAUREN DEBELLIS
Senior Editor

CARSON, CA— Tabletops Unlimited (TTU) has partnered with country music icon Dolly Parton on a new lifestyle collection that includes dinnerware; serveware; glassware; cookware; bakeware; and hydration products.

Inspired by her country roots and personal style and featuring quotes from Parton, as well as images that represent her legacy, the assortment weaves in a modern farmhouse look to present

a cohesive, on trend story for the home.

“Dolly wanted to create and introduce a new home collection for her brand,” said Bonnie Farias, vp/sales and product development, TTU. “We were approached by her team and presented with the opportunity to collaborate on this collection. We jumped on the opportunity as we all know Dolly as an icon and living legend. Not only is she beloved around the world, her country roots and style fit well into the farmhouse trend that is popular across the country.”

TTU said the collection taps into two popular trends that it feels will connect with consumers.

“The first is nostalgia,” Farias said. “People are taking more time to honor traditions and appreciate family and friends at home and around the table.”

The other trend is the farmhouse style that many consumers have embraced in their home over the last few years.

“There is a cozy element that’s involved with the farmhouse style, which

also goes hand-in-hand with nostalgia,” added Farias.

The vast collection features a wide variety of products that range from assorted platters and bowls with delicate floral and plaid designs, to wood serving boards and chip and dip sets in shapes such as guitars and butterflies.

Also included are cereal bowls that feature quotes from Parton, wicker basket white bakers, water bottles and a tea kettle.

TTU said the collection’s retail price range is designed to fit within “good” and “better” assortments and TTU plans to work with retailers on a merchandising approach so as to ensure the Dolly Parton brand is well represented.

“Dolly is very involved in this collection, as she reviews and approves every single item in the line. So, that ensures the collection is directly representative of Dolly’s style,” Farias said.

The packaging of the products prominently features Dolly so customers are able to immediately recognize the icon and are prompted to browse the items. The company also said retailers are buying and merchandising the items on feature tables on sales floors. **HWB**

Portmeirion’s Spode Heritage tableware collection is inspired by the brand’s archives.



Spode Brings Heritage To The Tabletop

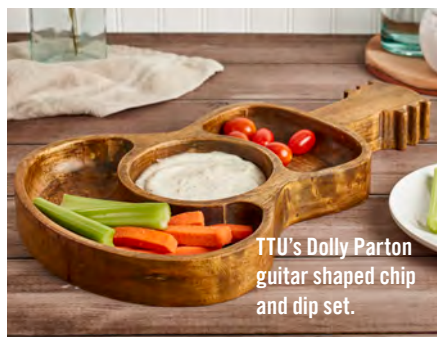
WATERBURY, CT— Portmeirion Group is celebrating the history of Spode, with dinnerware designs pulled from the longtime brand’s archives.

The new Spode Heritage collection features a medley of patterns taken from Spode’s design archive from the 19th century. According to the company, patterns are showcased in a statement-making black and white color palette. The palette, said Portmeirion, blends well with the traditional designs in order to suit a variety of home décor.

The collection has been expanded with additional serveware pieces, including trays, octagonal plates, mugs and tableware, in order to suit the needs and tastes of today’s consumers.

While Portmeirion taps into its past to entice younger consumers, the company continues to support one of its newest brands, Nambè. The brand has rolled out a new barware collection, Tahoe, as well as expanded into a new category with its Pet collection.

The Nambè Tahoe bar assortment is described as having a modern, clean, iconic design that captures the essence of mid-century modern bar tools. According to the company, the combination of two luxury materials, stainless steel with stitched leather banding, brings an elevated option to the home bar. The Tahoe bar collection includes a cocktail shaker, tray, pitcher, nut bowl and napkin holder. **HWB**



TTU’s Dolly Parton guitar shaped chip and dip set.

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Vendors expect this holiday season to be more about family gatherings. Shown here, Villeroy & Boch's Crafted tableware collection.

Tabletop Market

continued from page 1

Several vendors such as Lenox, Robinson Home Products, Denby and Gibson Overseas, have reported to HOMEWORLD BUSINESS® that their showrooms will remain closed during the market, and instead will showcase their latest introductions, many of which will be of a lesser amount, via virtual showrooms.

And while Forty One Madison is open every day and has approximately 40% of its permanent showrooms open and taking in-person appointments, Kristi Forbes, director and svp/Forty One Madison, said the new digital features found on the show hub, were designed to help visitors better connect with brands from afar.

"We want all of our virtual and in-person attendees to feel supported by Forty One Madison," said Forbes. "We are here to support their businesses and re-build our community during these challenging times. Health and safety continues to be our top priority while we work to bring everyone together."

The website, which Forbes said they were fortunate to have been

able to upgrade last fall, has enabled Forty One Madison to host virtual showrooms for vendors as dedicated brand pages that will be developed to conveniently offer downloadable sell sheets, interactive 3D virtual tours of showrooms, and direct lines of communication with showrooms.

In addition, Forty One Madison will offer a full schedule of programming that will include interactive workshops like floral styling classes, matcha-making, mixology demos, culinary

experiences, as well as educational webinars and video content.

Holiday Preparation

As the tabletop industry gathers, be it in-person or virtually, for the bi-annual event, the fall tabletop market also comes at a time when vendors and retailers alike are eagerly anticipating the all-important fourth quarter, one in which the industry hopes will prove to be a fruitful one after wading through the tumultuous last few

months due to the pandemic.

Vendors have reported that tabletop and what it means to consumers has changed over these last few months. While the category may not have seen as much action as other housewares categories did earlier this year as states began to shut down, it has emerged as an important purchase for consumers, especially ahead of the fourth quarter.

"We've actually had pretty status quo order volumes throughout the pandemic, prominent categories include bakeware and cookware," said David Nicklin, svp/marketing and licensing, Gibson Overseas. "What we have seen differently is that retailers are looking for additional opportunities, such as asking what else we may have available immediately in inventory. It's apparent that demand has increased during the pandemic and retailers are trying to catch up to it."

Entertaining guests in the home has been curbed, leading consumers to focus more on making their everyday home more comforting and inviting for themselves and their families. The products they surround themselves with have taken on a new meaning. And vendors have commented, especially with the holiday season



Casafina's oak wood serving board.

ahead, the industry is supporting this shift, encouraging its customers to inspire consumers to explore their tabletop needs.

"We are taking the stance to lead consumers through this new holiday season," said Stephanie Zoppina, marketing manager, advertising/pr/social, Lenox. "No one knows what may or may not be possible and so we will guide our consumers to make their homes feel even more merry than ever before. We won't be able to visit or host family and friends that live far away and so we encourage everyone to set their tables and use all of their decorations."

Nicklin said that based on the current shopping behavior, Gibson predicts that consumers will relieve their angst over the pandemic by shopping for the much-anticipated holidays.

"Many people will either prepare for the possibility of having guests over, if restrictions ease, or look forward to enjoying a homemade meal with their immediate family," he said. "Either way, we foresee that this holiday season will experience strong bakeware and serveware sales, both essentials for a joyful holiday meal with loved ones."

The importance of

gathering at the table and making even everyday meals special, will be something that vendors said they predict will continue well into 2021 and beyond. As such, vendors have said the industry's latest introductions at the fall New

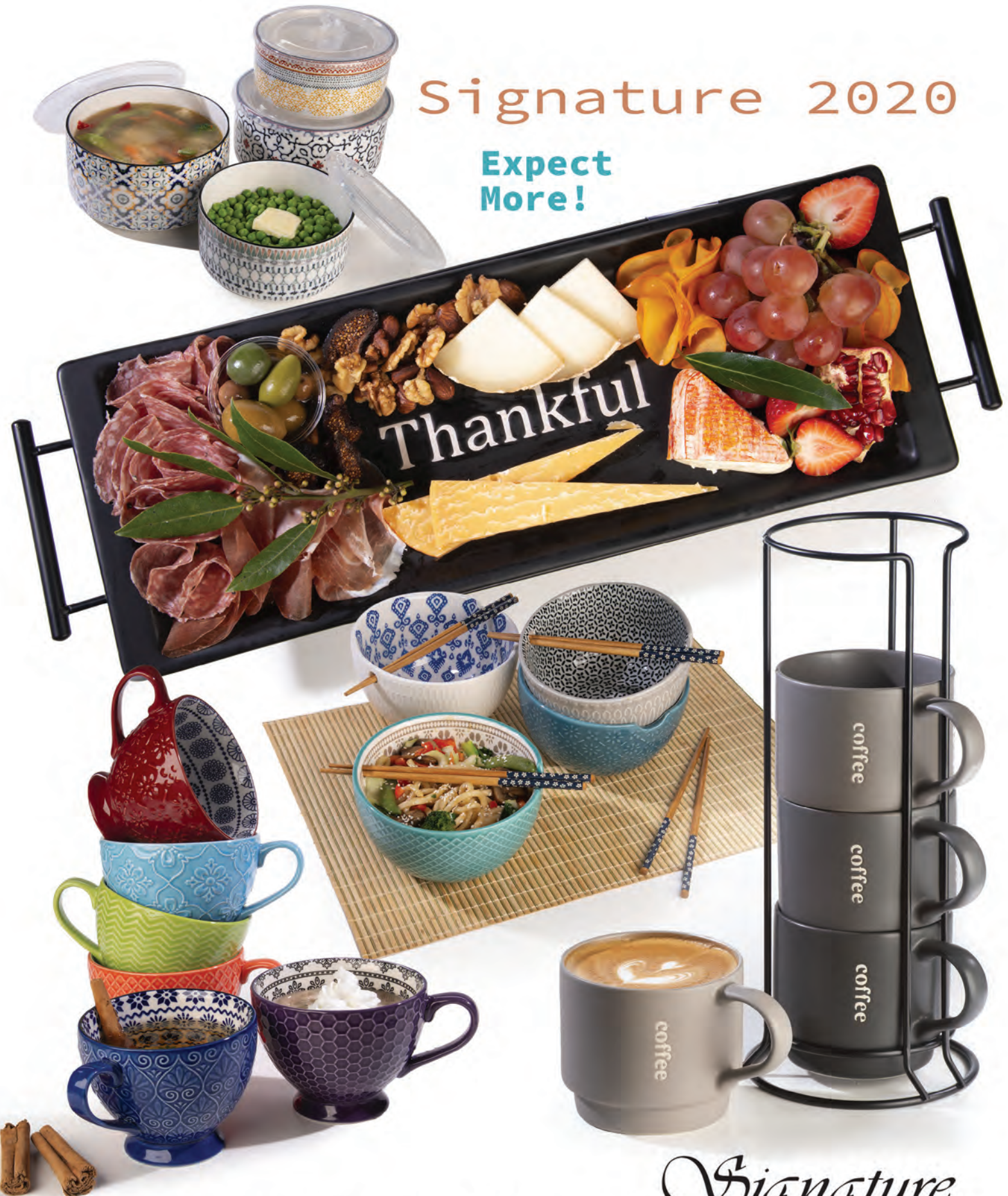
York Tabletop market will continue to reflect this shift, one that is highlighted by glimpses of optimism and by the desire to make the home a haven, a secure space that bring comfort from the outside world. **HWB**

Lifetime's Pfaltzgraff Bella tabletop collection.



Signature 2020

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Fortessa's Spindle flatware.





The Marmory dinnerware collection from Villeroy & Boch brings the marble design trend to the table.

Denby's Modus collection receives an update with pops of subdued colors. The collection combines layers of textural glazes, tonal colors and rich highlights.



Cozy Up

Comforting Colors Evoke A Modern Sensibility For The Home

Gathering around the table for a meal has taken on a new, special meaning over the last few months as the majority of consumers sheltered-at-home. Now, as consumers prepare to hunker down during the holiday season, amid the continued pandemic, attention will turn to the tableware they will reach for at home. Comforting, creamy, modern hues and tactile textures can be found as soothing options, across the various tabletop introductions making their debut during the fall New York Tabletop Market. Here, we take a look at new offerings that demonstrate modern sensibility, yet evoke the cozy feeling of home that will no doubt carry through well into 2021.



The Delray antiqued 16-piece dinnerware set by Mikasa from Lifetime Brands fuses modern design and rustic tradition.

Fortessa is featuring two glassware collections. Malcolm features an off-square shape and graphic beading for a retro-centric feel. Swirl offers a quirky, eclectic, whimsical visual appeal in three colors.



Gibson's Martha Stewart 12-piece Wood pattern dinnerware set and serveware features rustic white stoneware plates that boast crisp embossed details and edges to give the pieces a natural and untamed feel.





Crate & Barrel, CB2 Expand Tabletop Partnerships

NORTHBROOK, IL— Inspiration comes from many sources and for Crate & Barrel and CB2, its sister brand, designers Leanne Ford and Jennifer Fisher are the retailer's latest muses. Ford, an interior designer, recently launched an exclusive tabletop collection with Crate & Barrel, while Fisher, a jewelry designer, unveiled a capsule holiday collection for CB2.

The new 28-piece Leanne Ford for Crate & Barrel tabletop line builds upon her previous branded home and furniture collections with the retailer. The tabletop line is said to be inspired by an adventure in Portugal and the endless design inspiration Ford discovered on the city's streets and from her visits with local artisans so that every piece feels special and collected from personal travels. The collection was created in Ford's signature neutral color palette and includes ceramic dinnerware and serving pieces from Portugal, glassware from Turkey and linens from India.

Ford said she designed the multi-purpose items to be used as "living art" whether the pitcher is filled with flowers on a shelf or used for water during a dinner party.

"As entertaining at home becomes less important, the family meal becomes everything," said Ford. "Whatever time you're lucky to get off work, stop work, put your computer away and have a proper meal with your family. Make it an event. Put the lights down low and the music up. Even if it's takeout— putting your food on a beautiful (and real) plate goes a long way."

Highlights of the collection include

the Range dinner and salad plates, as well as bowls and a large serving bowl. The Aero black five-piece place setting is designed to complement the dinnerware, as are the Coco covered round dish, Stevey black pitcher, Gravy Baby, Uplifter cream pitcher with handle. Also included in the collection are Happy Hippie measuring cups, Berry Garcia colander, Pour Me extra large mixing bowl with handle and coordinating linens. The collection has a suggested retail price range of \$7.95 to \$129.95.

The Jennifer Fisher holiday capsule collection for CB2 evokes the jewelry designer's edgy, modern approach to design.

CB2 said Fisher brings a fresh, sophisticated approach to holiday entertaining with her new introductions.

The capsule collection includes an array of entertaining products including champagne and wine goblets, martini and cocktail glasses that pair back to a black-and-white marbled dinnerware collection. The assortment is made of raw porcelain mixed with color clay that create black-and-white swirls. **HWB**



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Cook & Bake

Gibson Partners With YouTube Chef Andrew Rea On New Line

By EMILY CAPPIELLO
Contributing Editor

COMMERCE, CA— As social media and influencers have become increasingly important to driving consumer experience, Gibson Overseas has entered into a partnership with YouTube star Andrew Rea, host of “Binging With Babish” and “Basics With Babish.”

Filmed in his Brooklyn, NY-based kitchen, self-taught home chef Rea began his YouTube channel out of a desire to experiment in the kitchen as well as teach home cooks to not be intimidated by trying something new. Rea, who has more than 7.95 million YouTube subscribers, is most well-known for his series featuring dishes from television and movies. “Binging With Babish” features foods such as the meat tornado from “Parks & Rec,” enchiladas from “Schitts Creek” and triple gooeyberry sunrise from “SpongeBob SquarePants.” “Basics With Babish” covers basic dishes, like hash browns and lamb chops, as well as cooking techniques.

Rea explained that the collaboration with Gibson was hands-on as far as development, which enabled both himself and Gibson to come up with final products that both were confident in. He explained that the products are reflective of both his personality and his cooking style.

“They worked with me on every hair-brained idea I could have had and did everything they could to try to make it work. The initial launch is more than I even imagined it would be and the collection has grown into a comprehensive set of items,” he said.

He explained that there are thoughtful considerations taken with each product to ensure his audience is able to have an enjoyable experience in their own home. One of these product design considerations includes tapered edges of each pan so that when whisking, the food doesn’t catch in the



“I tested all of the products myself. I use them constantly and test them strenuously because I want to make tools that I would use.”

—Andrew Rea,
Binging With Babish

pan, and whisks that have increased utilitarian value.

“People have trusted me with their kitchens for a long time. It’s very important to me to be able to fulfill their expectations, but that the products

are also accessible and of the utmost quality and utility,” he said.

Two of his favorite products, said Rea, is a chef’s knife/cleaver hybrid which he is calling a “clef” knife, as well as the saucier.

“The knife doesn’t taper off at the end and is great for utility. It has a great surface area and lots of power and width in the blade. It can run circles around other knives. And the saucier is wonderful. It’s deep and has a really wide base. It can be used for braising, deep frying, searing— it really is an all-purpose pan,” he explained.

The cookware collection is mixed medium and features stainless steel, carbon steel and non-stick cookware within the same set, something that Rea feels will separate the Babish-branded goods from others on the market.

According to Gibson, this is the company’s first venture into working with an influencer solely in the online segment. However, this is an important step for the company, allowing it to tap into the younger demographic of consumers that are heavily influenced by self-taught content creators.

Rea noted that the housewares, which he’s been showing on his YouTube channel the last few months, have already created a buzz with his audience.

Beginning with anchor categories cookware and cutlery, products will begin rolling out during the fourth quarter. Other housewares categories will begin debuting through 2021. **HWB**

Bradshaw’s Good Cook crispy baking set includes a rack and sheet pan.



Bradshaw Adds To Good Cook With Crispy Baking Set

RANCHO CUCAMONGA, CA— Bradshaw International is bringing a new crispy baking set to its GoodCook line of bakeware. The rack and sheet pan are designed to offer versatility and can be used for an array of different recipes.

The two-piece set features a baking rack that sits in the pan for oven crisping. Both pieces are oven safe up to 410-degrees Fahrenheit, and can also be used for glazing, drying or cooking baked goods, produce and meats. The rack can be nested into the pan for roasting meats and vegetables while catching juices below. The pan features extra-large, easy grip handles for safer handling, is metal-utensil and dishwasher-safe and features a non-stick surface made without PFOA.

“With the trend of home cooks learning tips and tricks on how to roast foods in the oven to create that gourmet or restaurant-style crisp on the rise, we wanted to offer a pan that would allow them to successfully achieve those goals,” said Keri Anderson, senior product manager, Bradshaw Home. “The GoodCook premium crispy baking set was designed with a rack that elevates vegetables and meats, lifting it away from its juices to achieve that crisp or dehydrated texture.”

The crispy baking set packaging features recipes for crispy baked bacon, classic buffalo wings, sweet apple chips, pepper crusted jerky and bacon wrapped sweet potato. **HWB**



Gibson’s Babish collection includes cutlery, cookware and kitchenware.

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Kitchen Electrics

Home Chefs Cooking Up Sous Vide Sales During Pandemic

BY DONNA BOYLE SCHWARTZ
Contributing Editor

NEW YORK— It is no secret that homebound consumers have been experimenting with new cooking methods, techniques and foods as a comforting and entertaining activity the whole family can enjoy. One relatively new product category generating buzz is the immersion circulator, used for sous vide cooking.

Sous vide, which is French for “under vacuum” and is also known as low temperature long time (LTLT), involves placing food in an airtight plastic pouch and immersing it in circulating water at a low, regulated temperature to retain moisture and ensure even cooking. The immersion circulator is designed to keep the water at the precise temperature while circulating it in and around the food.

“Sous vide cooking is a more precise, temperature-controlled and therefore gentle method of cooking, so it results in better taste, greater nutritional value and better texture, particularly with vegetables,” said Bob Lamson, CEO of Vesta Precision. “While it takes longer than conventional cooking methods, it is also usually much easier and more relaxing because it involves no attention once the sous vide process is underway. It is also time-forgiving, meaning that

once the set cooking time is reached it is not necessary to immediately remove the food. Another advantage is that, because of the precision of the immersion circulator, one can achieve the identical perfect results every single time.”

“With increased cooking at home and accompanying attention to healthy meals and quality, the consumer sous vide cooker business has definitely increased,” Lamson added. “We are addressing the uptick by ensuring inventory and delivery, managing multiple sales channels, increased social media presentations and influencer networking, and offering affordable special packages, including immersion circulator, vacuum sealer and vacuum bags for those just beginning sous vide.”

Vesta offers two consumer “stick” style sous vide models and three “tower” style professional models.

Sous vide cooking remains an important niche business for many companies, especially given the fact that homebound consumers have been willing to experiment with new techniques.

“Sous vide cooking has grown during the pandemic, because dinner has become an activity; an entertainment event for the family,” noted Joe Der-ochowski, home industry advisor for the NPD Group. “Because people have been staying home more, eating more at home and there are fewer nighttime



Gourmia offers a range of sous vide cooking tools from starter to pro units.

activities, and they have time, more people are experimenting with the idea of sous vide cooking.”

The stay-at-home orders earlier this year spawned a new wave of interest in the low-and-slow cooking method.

“We started seeing sales take off on air fryers and sous vide during these pandemic months, categories that had a market presence, yet were still considered ne’ cooking technologies by consumers,” said Heshy Biegeleisen, founder of Gourmia. “Our feeling is COVID-created cocooning has a lot to do with it, because people have more time on their hands to experiment and experience for themselves. Also, we appeal to a different, more dynamic demographic. This is a market that values craft and authenticity, two hallmarks of the sous vide experience.”

Gourmia offers a range of immersion circulators, according to Biegeleisen,

“everything from starter to serious sous vide units. Sous vide as a category is very near and dear to us, as that was one of the key categories that launched our brand about a half-decade ago. More importantly, all our products are accessibly priced yet with feature sets that reflected our understanding and commitment to space.”

Brentwood vice president Beni Panahi notes that television and social media have played a big role in popularizing the process.

“Between food blogs and food channels there are endless cooking articles and videos being watched and shared,” said Panahi. “With more eyes on this material, immersion cookers have inevitably received more attention and for good reason: Sous vide cooking with immersion cookers removes virtually any opportunity for error. Foods

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Crux/Ghetto Gastro

continued from page 6

collaborative kitchenware brand during the summer of 2019. The one-of-a-kind electrics line showcases sleek, simple-to-use appliances with bold design details, according to Shae Hong, CEO and founder of Made by Gather (formerly Sensio) and the Crux brand.

CRUXGG will be backed by a marketing program spotlighting social and earned media. Since the

official launch in September, the collection has been featured on Instagram by celebrity influencers such as actor Michal B. Jordan, actress Ruby Rose and supermodel Bella Hadid.

“Ghetto Gastro represents youth and a culture that is transcending boundaries, which aligns with the brand ethos of Crux,” Hong said. “With CRUXGG, we wanted to redefine the category, bringing never-before-seen style to the countertop and doing it with purpose through partnerships with Know Your Rights, ReThink Food and C-CAP.”

“From the moment we linked up with Shae and the Crux team last year, we knew that we shared a vision for disrupting and breathing new energy into the category,” said Gray, co-founder of Ghetto Gastro. “We created CRUXGG to tell a story through our shared visions of style and purpose, one that lifts up communities and allows us to connect through food.”

Williams Sonoma president Ryan Ross said, “Ghetto Gastro’s culinary prowess and passion for design, culture and community come through in every piece of the collection. Williams Sonoma began working with Ghetto Gastro and Crux on a collaboration over a year ago out of admiration for the culinary collective’s shared commitment to community and advancing social justice through food.”

Crux and Ghetto Gastro announced that 100% of the proceeds from the collaboration through October 2020 will be donated to ACLU’s Know Your Rights Camp, which helps advocate efforts to end police brutality, demand racial justice and defend the rights to protest.

Hong, in an exclusive interview with HomeWorld Business Editor-in-Chief Peter Giannetti, discussed the inspiration behind the Crux and Ghetto Gastro collaboration and other key considerations in the development and marketing of the CRUXGG collection.

Peter Giannetti: How did the Crux and Ghetto Gastro collaboration begin?

Shae Hong: We were introduced in the spring of 2019 by a mutual friend... You know when you have the gut

instinct: There was something special, a good vibe. We didn’t know exactly what it was going to be. When it comes to fashion, design and culture, we connected. They were these amazing, classically trained chefs that worked in the greatest kitchens. It was intriguing. There was a positive energy created around culinary interest and giving back to the community.

PG: The CRUXGG collaboration arrives as the retail housewares market intersects with an escalating social responsibility and social justice movement, often led by younger generations. Discuss the consumers for which this program was developed. How wide is the brand’s potential consumer audience?

SH: I’ve always felt like established kitchen brands were always talking to the same psychographic and demographic. It didn’t make sense as the younger generation started to evolve. Brands weren’t really speaking to them through marketing, design, how to cook, the stories behind the product.

The CRUXGG audience is not simply a demographic. It’s a psychographic— an up-and-coming generation of culinary creatives. It’s about culture, artistry, social meaning.

Social justice is a part of the Ghetto Gastro DNA. They want to bring positivity to the community through cooking. It’s always about giving back. The

consumer we’re looking at with this brand appreciates Ghetto Gastro’s uplifting message.

PG: How involved was Ghetto Gastro in product development?

SH: They’re chefs. They’re used to working with commercial kitchen products. They had never used an air fryer. But once they did, they were blown away by the possibilities.

Once engaged with the product, they started asking questions and suggesting improvements. They shared insights on how they cook. For example, they use juicers to make purees for sauces. I had never even thought of that.

PG: How is the consumer marketing strategy consistent with the CRUXGG market positioning?

SH: We’re heavily leaning into social media and earned media. There is a journey this consumer— this psychographic— goes on to learn about most things. We want to be along the path for that journey.

Ghetto Gastro is working with us to provide a tremendous amount of content, and they’re developing recipes for the product.

More people are cooking. They are looking for new things to get excited about and enhance their experience. We don’t think this psychographic has

been spoken to effectively by our industry. The CRUXGG collaboration does.

PG: What makes Williams-Sonoma an ideal retail partner in the launch?

SH: Williams-Sonoma came in very early during this project. They are very socially active. They are all about positivity. Bringing three groups together resulted in a perfectly integrated relationship from the beginning. Everyone understood the vision.

The partnership with Williams Sonoma is very strong. We’re taking a slow build approach; we want to solidify the DNA of the CRUXGG brand by building one-on-one relationships with the consumer.

PG: What are expansion plans for the CRUXGG collection?

SH: There will be new products next year— electric and non-electric. What’s critical is that each product offers something meaningful and innovative that connects with the CRUXGG ethos. **HWB**



“There was a positive energy created around culinary interest and giving back to the community.”

—Shae Hong,
Made by Gather

THE CRUXGG COLLECTION FOR WILLIAMS SONOMA INCLUDES:

THE KING— a 3.5-horsepower, 10-speed capacitive touch blender in matte black; \$299.95.

THE DRIP— a 14-cup programmable coffee-maker in matte black featuring three coffee regular, gourmet, and bold coffee strength settings; \$99.95.

THE MUSA— a 6.5-quart AirPro pressure cooker/air fryer combo in matte black featuring 10 cooking functions; \$299.95.

THE BRED— a 2-pound breadmaker in matte black featuring 15 preset programs, two loaf sizes and three crust colors; \$169.95.

THE SATA— a 2-slice toaster in matte black featuring extra-wide slots, 6 shade settings and reheat; \$69.95.

THE TRNR— a rotating double waffle maker in matte black with a bright red heating plate is designed to cook as many as eight Belgian-style waffles in less than 10 minutes; \$149.95.

THE NEFI— a 6-slice digital toaster oven with convention air frying function; \$249.95.



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Lasko

continued from page 8

floor to retailer to consumer cart, an invaluable asset in a weather-driven business,” he said.

While all of Lasko’s fans are produced domestically, the new Cyclonic digital heaters represent the first time in decades that the company has made heaters in the U.S.

“When motors left the U.S., as an industry, heaters left the U.S.,” Vlacich noted. “Now, we’ve brought heaters back.”

Consumer sentiment towards made in the U.S. is on the rise, but Vlacich pointed out that domestic products must be competitively priced to succeed.

“We are hitting the sweet spot throughout our product line, which combines efficacy, quality and price-point,” he said, pointing out that the new cyclonic heaters represent just the beginning of the company’s planned heater offerings and feature a range of industry-leading high-tech features.

Specifically, the CC24920 heater model offers what is said to be the first touch-sensitive digital controls in the industry, along with an easy-to-clean filter. The CC24910 heater model features a multi-function remote control.

Additional features on both units include an adjustable thermostat; eight-hour auto-off timer, and two quiet heat settings. Both units deliver 1,500 watts of warmth, are sold fully assembled with an easy-carry handle, and come with a three-year limited warranty.

The Cyclonic heaters are specifically designed to heat larger rooms more efficiently, pulling cooler air in through the bottom of the unit and distributing heat further into the room from the top. The slim and space-saving design allows the unit to be placed against the wall in any room. The CC24920 is available exclusively at Walmart for \$77.93 and the CC24910 is available at Home Depot for \$99.97.

Sharp increases in consumer health and wellness concerns are spurring Lasko’s renewed emphasis on air purifiers, and the company is debuting two collections this fall.

“Consumers are paying a lot more attention to air quality, and they are much more aware of how air purification can help them achieve a healthier home environment,” Vlacich said.

Lasko is offering three higher-end models and a more entry-level unit. The higher-end models will retail from \$60 to \$120 and remove the most common indoor air pollutants, including viruses, smoke, odors, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), pet dander, pollen, dust and mold.

The more entry-level air purifier line will retail from \$40 to \$50, and feature a two-in-one fan and air filter configuration.

“We want to open the market up to consumers who want to improve their indoor air quality, but can’t afford a higher-end model,” Vlacich said. “This is also a great unit for a workout room, garage or workshop area.”

Vlacich said the expanded product line fits



“The benefit to domestic manufacturing is that it allows us to respond to sudden changes in demand.”

—Ed Vlacich,
Lasko Products

in well with Lasko’s overall approach to the market.

“We have three main strategic goals,” he explained. “First, to be recognized as a ‘best in class’ contemporary industrial company by our customers, consumers, employees and shareholders. Second, to grow our top-line sales and expand in the home environment category by looking for strategic adjacencies, and third, to build profitability and increase shareholder value.”

“The combination of an expanded product line and increased domestic production will help us meet those goals, while at the same time, bringing more jobs to our economy,” he said. “Our focus is all about meeting demand and being there for the consumer. Our retail customers know they can rely on us, and consumers know they can rely on us— they will always find a Lasko product, when they need it.” **HWB**



Lasko is also launching an air purifier assortment this fall.

Pretika Wins High Tech Finalist Award

RIVERSIDE, CA— Pretika’s patented Connected Skin Care Technology was recognized as a finalist in the 2020 High Tech Awards Consumer Technology Innovation Category, the only housewares firm ever to receive this designation.

“Technology is really the driver behind everything that we do,” said Thomas Nichols, Pretika president. “We are taking our brand into the next level of technology with our SonicLift 2.0 Facial Toning Device, a handheld micro-current anti-aging/wrinkle reduction device featuring our proprietary Connected Skin Care Technology, featuring a built-in digital camera with API/APP technology for IOS and Android devices.”

The annual High Tech Awards (HTA) are sponsored by OCTANe, a leading technology and life sciences accelerator organization.

“As a finalist, this recognizes Pretika as a company that exhibits innovation in a consumer technology, demonstrates innovation and differentiation compared to its competitors, and has a sustainable growth strategy,” Nichols noted. “We were very excited and honored to be recognized as an innovator.” **HWB**



Pretika's SonicLift 2.0 facial toning device with connected skin care technology.

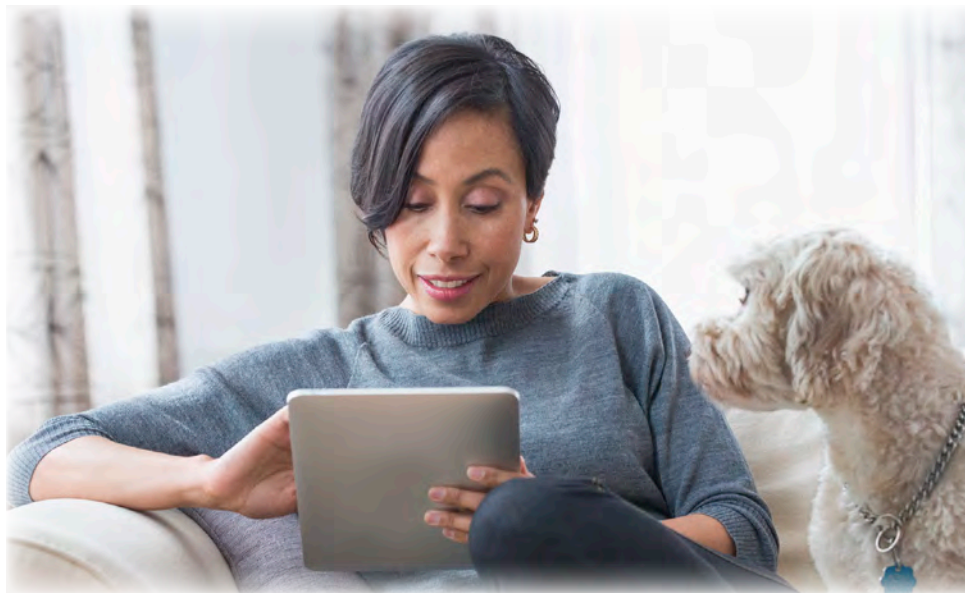
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Overstock

continued from page 6

“The business model we have can help as people stay indoors and strive to make their home life better to accommodate for their kids attending school from home: Overstock can provide desks, for example,” he said. “They could order online from the safety of their home and have things delivered. As the pandemic hit, people were given the stay at home mandates and our business really took off.”

Whereas revenues had dipped 20% in 2019, Nielsen said, the real sales acceleration began in the last two weeks of March with Overstock marketplace items such as elastic bands for making masks gaining quickly. At that point, core home furnishings items took off, advancing to 91.9% of the sales mix, a more than 400 basis points improvement year over year.

Nielsen pointed out that what happened doesn’t only have present consequences. He pointed out that only about 23% of furniture shoppers in the U.S. purchased online before the COVID-19 pandemic and that the proportion was increasing slowly. Then home furnishings consumers increasingly turned to digital commerce. Consumers were addressing requirements they had in preparing homes for more activities at a time when visiting stores to meet their needs was difficult to impossible.

“What we saw was that number increase to a 36% penetration rate,” he said. “A lot of customers in the home furnishings industry thought they had to sit on a sofa or sit on a chair before buying. What they realized is: Hey this is really easy, and it gets to the door faster than it would if bought from a local store. As people were compelled to buy online, we’ve seen our 28 day repeat rate increase 15% to 16%. We believe this situation is fast forwarding online purchasing in the home furnishings industry.”

From the internal perspective, Overstock’s business model was sufficiently flexible to allow a quick response to pandemic circumstances, Nielsen said. The headquarters staff was able to work from home. Fulfillment centers remained open, deemed essential businesses, and the company worked with local authorities and other government entities to establish conditions allowing the facilities to function 24/7.

In addition, the company worked



Home office furniture has been a strong seller during the pandemic, Overstock indicated.

closely with its inventory suppliers to support their drop shop operations. Not that it was easy, Nielsen said, as the company constantly had to reconfigure how it was receiving and distributing product as demand increased and the supply chain felt the pressure. Overstock efforts included everything from greater emphasis on analysis and forecasting to executive contact and discussion aimed at how and where adaptations could be made to keep products moving to consumers.

Even with adjustments, Overstock had to interact with customers and keep them posted as to how typical delivery time frames might be altered or disrupted. Overstock did what it could to keep things flowing as quickly as possible. Luckily, he said, most customers had a common sense response to conditions.

“They understood we were going through tough challenges,” Nielsen said.

Of course, the challenge of connecting consumers to products that could satisfy their needs was exacerbated by the fact that some merchandise categories experienced extraordinary demand at a time when most segments Overstock provides were subject to increased interest. As it worked to get people home office and outdoor furniture, Overstock also



Overstock worked with its inventory suppliers to support fulfillment.

had to cope with increased demand in everything from throw rugs to accent chairs.

“Just about every product category saw significant increases, and that speaks more to transformational change,” he said. “Otherwise, we just would have seen increases in specific product categories.”

One reason Overstock had the success it has in 2020 is a strategic focus away from what key competitors are doing and onto targeted customer designations, value savvy shoppers and reluctant refreshers, consumers who have to be given a reason to purchase. The company, as a pure e-commerce player, also intends to engage consumers who want simplicity rather than having to parse different

offers for different delivery and pick up alternatives. Which is an interesting approach given that, pre-Internet, lots of loyal catalog shoppers once scoured volumes of product offers for unique values and ordered by phone for delivery.

Nielsen noted that the simplicity pure-play Overstock is offering may actually have brought back customers who had drifted away at some point but now are satisfied to have a simpler online shopping experience.

“Getting customers to come back to us was part of the strategy going into 2020, and that only strengthened in the pandemic,” he said. “It allowed us to focus on our customer and focus on our retail strategy.” **HWB**

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At Home

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Chad Stauffer, At Home chief merchandising officer, said the company has been pleased to craft a collection with high-end style at sharp values. Style and value will be critical in the ongoing collaboration that At Home and Mitchell will cultivate and extend. Mitchell's classics with a twist styling approach provides a flexibility in development but also a grounding in practicality and practice. In the case of the initial collection, Mitchell based product development on what she experienced in renovating her 100-year-old home in Fort Worth, TX, as well as products she commonly turns to in her everyday doings.

"When Grace set out to build this collection, she focused on the kinds of pieces she loves to use when decorating a room, but often has a hard time finding in stores," Stauffer said. "With this collection our customer can get the kind of high-end decorator touches she's always dreamed of but at the amazing prices she's come to expect from At Home."

In approaching the collection, Mitchell said she wanted to translate traditional designs for today's consumer.

"As far as the process, I came to the table with ideas of some items I wanted to create, whether they were vintage items I wanted to do a fresh take on, or products I wished I could find in stores and never could," she said. "From there, we ordered samples and tweaked them as needed. Maybe the color, maybe the style, maybe the size."

Mitchell said that consumers who have been spending more time home are increasingly inclined to freshen interiors they've been living with for what seems like too long. Although

many, in an era when home decorating information and expertise is abundantly available, have at least some confidence in their ability to switch up the looks of their home, consumers don't necessarily want to just jump on the current trend. Many consumers appreciate a connection to tradition even if they don't feel altogether bound to it. Mitchell said she recognizes that such consumers want to connect the then and now, but with the added notion that they are telling a tale about who they are personally and, very often, about their families.

"The message I get from people is: My whole home design is around the idea of a story," she said. "I really was thinking about whoever loves home and wants to make their home feel special and unique."

As it launched in all 219 At Home stores, Stauffer pointed out that the collaboration with Mitchell emerged, at its inception, from a commonality of approach.

"About a year ago, we sat down with Grace for the first time after being introduced by a mutual friend," he said. "We have been incredibly focused on bringing our customer the best new home trends at the best prices, and when we met with Grace, it just clicked. Grace is all about storytelling through her designs and that's something I'm incredibly passionate about: How do we use the 50,000 SKUs in our store not only to deliver great value but to help our customer build a home that tells their family's story?"

Stauffer and Mitchell agreed that the collection isn't about a specific target group within the larger At Home customer base. Rather, it has been designed so that just about any shopper entering an At Home store could find something or some things attractive within the collection at an affordable

pricepoint, such as a decorative clock at \$12.99 or a tufted upholstered bench for \$99.99.

"One of the most fun parts of shopping at At Home is we really do have all décor styles under one roof," Stauffer said. "Our customer is creative and passionate about home décor and we're focused on bringing her the best of every style at an incredible value. We have set out a plan to find and partner with the best collaborators in each of the styles our customers love, and we are excited to partner with Grace on an assortment that we know will inspire and delight our traditional décor customer."

This isn't the first collaborative collection launched by At Home even if it's the first one intended to develop as an exclusive brand. Stauffer said the retailer builds design partnerships based on consistent terms. What was true in the past was true with the Mitchell collaboration even if it will be more expansive.

"First off, we have a rule at At Home that we seek out partnerships with people we genuinely like," he said. "That was easy with Grace. We are thrilled to be embarking on a collaboration with a partner we admire and respect as much as her. Secondly, she's Fort Worth born and raised. We're a Texas-based brand and that connection for our first full brand collaboration just made sense. And lastly, her design aesthetic is classic and timeless. We've seen a lot of farmhouse collaborations in the market over the past few years. We thought our customer would love to see something different. There's a lot of beauty in what Grace does: It's rooted in classic shapes but it has Grace's amazing twist."

The effort At Home and Mitchell put into developing the collection effectively marks the retailer's initiation into building exclusive brands.

"This is really the first time we've pulled together such an extensive and long-term collaboration," Stauffer said. "Given our unique model and 100,000 square-foot store, we think this is the sort of immersive shopping experience our customer could only really find at At Home. The response has already been incredible, and we're excited to have several more collaborations in the pipeline."

The launch of the Mitchell collection not only represents a new phase in At Home's evolution but also as a new approach to providing shoppers with something fresh and potentially exciting. **HWB**

Sous Vide

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vacuum-sealed in bags and fully submerged in water are cooked evenly all the way through to the precise temperature set. Because the food is completely sealed it retains all its juices, keeping food juicy and flavorful."

Brentwood is featuring the SV-2010V Immersion Cooker, which boasts a slim and sleek profile that clips to the side of a container or pot.

Several companies are ramping up production to take advantage of heightened consumer interest. This fall, for instance, Yedi Houseware is launching the Infinity sous vide, featuring a patented octagonal shape and circulation pattern.

"The direction, flow, and distribution of water movement is both unique and substantive," said Yedi president Bobby Djavaheeri. "The Infinity's combination of water circulation and octagonal shape creates a more even and precise water flow distribution. More specifically, 'Octcision Technology,' with eight sides and four perforated openings, pushes heated water against the side and throughout the container that holds the device in a way that avoids cool spots and uneven water distribution, creating increased precision and accuracy within the cooking process."

Anova Culinary is offering WiFi- and Bluetooth-connected models for the consumer market.

"When we launched our first device in 2013, most sous vide devices were bulky, costly and could only be used by the pros," said Anova communications manager, Austin Lewis. "We wanted to share sous vide cooking with consumers because it gives the home cook unparalleled control over temperature. We believe that type of control and precision, and the results that come with it, is what is appealing to consumers."

"As more people are staying home to stop the spread of COVID-19, they're also cooking at home for themselves and their loved ones," Lewis added. "We think it bodes very well for the future of the category and its growth." **HWB**

Yedi has introduced the Infinity sous vide tool, which touts a new circulation pattern.



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