

Dear Journalist:

The 2006 International Home & Housewares Show gathers thousands of products, companies, trend and lifestyle experts, designers and retailers under one roof for three days, Sunday, March 12 through Tuesday, March 14. Take advantage of this once-a-year industry confab to cover the products and trends that your audience will crave. The event-packed Show draws more than 2,000 exhibitors, along with 60,000 total attendees from more than 100 countries. The Show is owned and operated by the nonprofit International Housewares Association headquartered in Rosemont, IL

According to the experts, home comfort, home organization and home improvement are the dominant trends among American consumers in 2006 as many homeowners direct their energies toward creating a one-of-a-kind home environment. No longer just trying to keep up with the “Joneses,” Americans want a home that embodies their a unique style and design – theirs. This means no more cookie-cutter approaches to decorating, which in turn is challenging the housewares industry to market products that emphasize design, color and style. They also want products that are easy to use and portable, which fits their often-frenetic lifestyles and lack of time. And, of course, the well-documented Baby Boomer wave has a huge influence on housewares and trends. As they see their kids off to college, empty nesters are breaking traditional rules too, and outfitting their homes to reflect a still active and exploratory lifestyle.

Visiting the Show provides ample fodder for a variety of stories that will have an impact on your audience. Some highlights:

- **The New Exhibitor Area and New Product Showcases:** If you’re interested in an overview of what’s hot and what’s not, what’s coming and what’s going, take a quick tour of the new exhibitor area, which offers a concise look at new products and trends. Every year, the new exhibitors spice up the Show with their unique ideas and products. New Product Showcases are located in the Buyers Club (News Media is allowed in with a badge) in each building, North, South and Lakeside, and feature brand new products in each category. Stories on specific products, categories or lifestyles can benefit from a quick tour.
- **The GOHO District:** The Gourmet Home & Food (GOHO) District has been a smashing success since its 2004 launch. It returns in 2006 with 130 exhibitors of gourmet and specialty foods and products, the **GOHO Cooking Theater** featuring a who’s who of celebrity chefs making some of their favorite dishes and the **Cook Book Nook**, a bookstore with 100 of the leading titles from the many exhibitors at the Show. For all things food, this is the place to be.
- **Two new destinations: Design ALIVE,** a TV studio right on the Show floor where professional designers and leading-edge retailers share their insights on the growing importance of design and **Elements of Style**, which offers a first look at emerging, design-driven suppliers from around the world. They have been especially recruited to bring their unique design concepts to the Show audience. This is where to see how individual elements mingle to create fresh ideas for the home.
- **Housewares Design Theater:** A three-day Mecca for professionals involved in housewares product design, the Theater features continuous presentations on the various aspects of design-driven product marketing and a revolving cast of design experts who can answer any design-oriented questions thrown at them. Learn what industry insiders know in one place.

Thousands of exciting, colorful and “wow”-filled products illuminate such lifestyle trends as:

- **Design is King!:** As consumers increasingly look for housewares that add sophistication and elegance to their homes, while industry consolidation drives companies to find new ways to differentiate their products, design has emerged as the engine for both. Consumers want sleek and easy-to-use. Companies are obliging with a wave a new designs that are “counterworthy,” yet practical. It’s no coincidence that a central theme of the 2006 Show is - you guessed it – design in its myriad forms.
- **Organize that Cocoon:** For years, Americans have shown a strong desire to reinvent their homes as sanctuary and entertainment hub. This “cocooning” has matured enough that homeowners are now putting the same energy into organizing all the comfort products they’ve purchased into non-traditional spaces that reflect a more modern lifestyle, e.g. formal dining rooms are becoming obsolete while craft rooms for scrap booking and other activities are springing up in their place.

- **The Great Outdoors:** You've probably seen that as part of the overall "entertaining at home" trend, homeowners are expanding their useable space by moving outdoors. Patios once festooned with tiki torches and party lights and being transformed into elegant, self-contained spaces for cooking and entertaining. Consider it a room with a view – of the backyard.
- **Specialty Foods:** Years ago, the category of specialty foods was focused on fancy treats that enlivened parties and provided a topic of conversation. Now, harried homeowners lacking time to cook are looking toward the specialty food category to fill basic needs, like the need to eat well and quickly. One result: the comeback of crock-pots and agreements with food companies to supply pre-packaged meals that simply slip into the pots. Another trend: Kitchen products that do more than look pretty on the counter. Last year, the Show portended the popularity of single-serving coffee makers that produce high-quality Joe without the muss and fuss. This year other major timesaving food trends will emerge on the Show floor, probably months before many of the products actually hit the market.
- **Baby Boomer Parents:** As the leading edge of Baby Boomers turn 60 in 2006, many of them are faced with big decisions regarding their aging parents. While trying to accommodate their parents in comfort, Baby Boomers are also trying to accommodate themselves, which is translating to new spaces attached to the house, yet with separate kitchens and bathrooms. This allows Boomers to key an eye on their parents while maintaining their own comfort castles in styles that don't compromise their important sense of self. Many exhibitors at the Show will be featuring products that feed into this growing trend.
- **Home Technology:** Home technology is becoming easier to use and less expensive every day. The question remains: Are we incorporating this technology out of necessity or are we seeing the first wave of a lifestyle revolution? Right now, the answer probably lies in both. Which products are homeowners seeing as necessary and which are just fun to have? You can find out at the Show.

As a journalist with time constraints, you'll appreciate the expertise of our veteran communications team in helping arrange interviews, identify products and trends, track down CEOs or entrepreneurs. If you plan to write an advance story, we can put you in touch with housewares companies nationwide or in your specific region, and provide 2005 Show images.

Don't hesitate to call (1-847-692-0110) or e-mail me (dteschke@housewares.org) if I can be of any assistance. I hope to see you at the Show.

Deborah A. Teschke
Manager, Media Relations & Communications

Ed. Note: For a choice of hotels, I suggest you register right away at www.housewares.org or call the Housewares Registration Desk, 1-800-752-1052 or 312-527-7294 (U.S.). Online badge registration for News Media will end February 7, so register early. After that date, you will have to register onsite in the News Center.