

DESIGN DEFINES THE CUTTING EDGE IN HOUSEWARES INNOVATION TODAY

Companies Differentiate Their Products on Store Shelves with Stand-Out Design

ROSEMONT, ILL (January 2008)—Simply put, innovative design is “the key to success” in today’s crowded housewares market, says Jeff Siegel, Chairman-elect of the International Housewares Association Board of Directors.

“We introduced over 3,000 new products in 2007 and will greatly increase the amount in 2008,” says Siegel, president/chief executive officer of Lifetime Brands, Inc. “We’ve invested in over 90 in-house designers, most of whom work in our Innovation Center.”

Another IHA Board member, Barry Harper, says “innovation is always needed to help keep your name in front of the end users and the merchandise managers. Innovation in our company ranges from measurable performance improvement of an existing product to a totally new product using new materials, features or benefits.” Harper is president/CEO of Harper Brush Works, Inc.

Given the emphasis on design innovation in the industry, the 2008 International Home + Housewares Show includes several exhibits that focus on particular aspects of design. Altogether, they celebrate the drive for innovation that keeps consumers coming back to the housewares marketplace.

Housewares Design Theater

A showcase for insights from top designers and consumer researchers in the housewares industry, the Housewares Design Theater this year emphasizes the burgeoning “green” movement and its impact on the industry. Topics will include sustainable design of new products, corporate sustainability reporting, sustainable materials use, green products for Chinese consumers, new packaging approaches, defining “green” for consumers, the emotional currency of sustainability and integrating environmental responsibility into the design process.

IHA’s Consumer Advisory Council, part of a larger group of 100 cutting-edge consumers, will offer their views on products and trends at the Show in a program at the Housewares Design Theater. One of the key trends they mentioned in a 2007 survey was the “green” movement. Nearly 80 percent said they

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are extremely or somewhat concerned about the environment and have embraced new behaviors aimed at environmental protection. Recycling is the most popular route they take, followed by a reduction in energy use and buying products that are better for the environment. Nearly 80 percent of the Advisory Council members have purchased a product based on its perceived impact on the environment.

A complete listing of Housewares Design Theater presentations is available at www.housewares.org/show/info/events.aspx.

Design Directions: Going Green

This dual-themed display will feature examples of sustainable packaging and innovative uses of eco-friendly materials in product design. Visitors can watch video presentations and see samples of the selected products and packaging, and view a display of the latest “green” materials available for product development. Experts will be on hand throughout the Show to discuss green design in an informal atmosphere and offer information on design resources and materials options.

Design Defined

A concise snapshot of products on the 2008 Show floor that reflect innovative design, this selection of housewares is “defined” by teams of design professionals and design students who fan out in the Clean + Contain Expo (North Building) in search of products of noteworthy design that they believe will drive business in 2008. Those products selected will be announced Monday, March 17 and featured in a presentation playing continuously through the close of the Show. This is a rare chance to consider which housewares products impress the people who are in the business of design. Selections from 2007 will be featured in a display in the Grand Concourse Lobby, Level 3 of the North Building.

Global Design

With more than 800 product suppliers from outside the U.S. at the 2008 Show, there is a distinct international flavor on the exhibit floors. Today, well-designed housewares products come from around the world. These global suppliers will be located in categories throughout the Show this year, including country pavilions that feature high design from Thailand and Turkey.

As part of the international design connection, visitors should also take a leisurely walk through

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the Global Crossroads Expo in the North Building. This unique Expo focuses on the international pavilions, which offer unlimited sources of innovative products for buyers from around the world. Global Crossroads is a fascinating cross-section of products arranged by country and offers a snapshot of trends in different regions of the world.

IHA Student Design Competition

Where do great housewares designers come from? Many emerge from the annual competition that culminates in the winners displaying their products at the Show. Celebrating its 15th anniversary, the IHA Student Design Competition has been lauded by an *Innovation* magazine article, “Learning to Win,” as a model for helping to build a future cadre of industrial designers. “The continual evolution of the IHA Student Design Competition is and has always been planned with attention to the needs of students entering practice,” the article says. “It emphasizes and rewards the design process, the education of the whole designer and the value of substance in conjunction with style.”

The competition had been so influential, in fact, that many academic design programs in North America have integrated the competition into their curricula. See the future of housewares design up close and personal. The students are happy to describe their products and the intense, months-long process from which they were developed.

Pantone ColorWatch

More than ever, color is a critical element in the marketplace success of housewares products. And no one is more tuned into what colors will pique interest in a given year than Pantone. An increasingly popular form of self-expression via the home, color has been embraced by consumers as an emotional trigger that is a key factor in more than 60 percent of their purchases. ColorWatch focuses on eight color palettes representing the strongest home furnishing trends for 2009. Each palette’s story includes the individual Pantone colors that comprise it, the philosophy behind the palette and Show products illustrating each one. Head for the color crystal ball in the Level 3 Lobby of the Lakeside Center.