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WORLD'S BEST HOMEGOODS RETAILERS HONORED WITH GLOBAL INNOVATION AWARDS IN CHICAGO

CHICAGO (March 7, 2015) – Excellence in housewares retailing is an important focus at the 2015 International Home + Housewares Show in Chicago as the world's most innovative and creative home and housewares retailers are honored at the 15th annual Global Innovation Awards (*gia*) program.

Twenty-five national *gia* winners, from 24 countries around the globe have been invited to Chicago by the Show and the International Housewares Association (IHA), the global sponsors and organizers of the *gia* program.

The *gia* program was created by the IHA and International Home + Housewares Show to foster innovation and excellence in home and housewares retailing throughout the world. Since the launch of *gia* in 2000, there have been over 320 *gia* retail award winners, from 40 countries on six continents.

The *gia* competition is structured on a two-tier level, national and global, to honor independent and multiple location home and housewares retailers for excellence in several business categories:

- Overall mission statement, vision and strategy
- Store design and layout
- Visual merchandising, displays and window displays
- Marketing, advertising and promotions
- Customer service and staff training
- Innovation

Each national *gia* winner is invited to the International Home + Housewares Show in Chicago where the global *gia* jury, consisting of four experts representing Asia, Europe and the Americas, plus a rotating group of co-sponsoring trade publication editors from around the world, will select up to five *gia* Global Honorees and the winner of the Martin M. Pegler Award for Excellence in Visual Merchandising.

The 2014-2015 national *gia* winners are:

Country	Store Name	Store website
Argentina	ORGANIZZA	www.organizza.com.ar
Australia	Koskela	www.koskela.com.au

Brazil	Presentes Rodriguez	www.presentesrodriguez.com.br
Canada	Hudson's Bay	www.thebay.com
China	MLILY HOME	www.mlily.com
Colombia	Mettler	
Denmark	Munk	www.munkshop.dk
Eastern Europe (Romania)	KITCHENSHOP	www.pentrugatit.ro
France	Oh my Kitchen!	www.ohmykitchen.com
Germany	Bärle am Friedrichsplatz	www.baerle-friedrichsplatz.de
India	Home Centre	www.homecentrestores.com
Ireland	Stock Design	
Italy	Contini	www.continiappia.com
Japan	IDÉE	www.idee.co.jp/shop
Middle East (United Arab Emirates)	THE One Total Home Experience	www.theone.com
Netherlands	Coolblue	www.coolblue.nl
New Zealand	The Design Depot	www.thedesigndepot.co.nz
Poland	Dobroteka	www.dobroteka.pl
Russia	Torgoviy Dom KWESTOR LLC	www.dom-vsevnem.ru
South Africa	Metelerkamps	www.metelerkamps.co.za
Turkey	Jumbo	www.jumbo.com.tr
UK	John Lewis	www.johnlewis.com
Uruguay	Vivai	www.vivai.com.uy
USA	Marcel's Culinary Experience	www.marcelsculinaryexperience.com
USA – Internet/ Catalogue	Wayfair	www.wayfair.com

During the 2015 International Home + Housewares Show in March, the winners are honored at a festive awards dinner, where the 2014-2015 *gia* Global Honorees and the winner of the Martin M. Pegler Award for Excellence in Visual Merchandising will be announced. Other *gia* highlights at the International Home + Housewares Show include a *gia* showcase in the Hall of Global Innovation, in Lakeside Center Lobby, where visuals of the national *gia* winners' award-winning store design and branding ideas, examples of exquisite visual merchandising and innovative displays are on display. Banners for the honored retailers can be seen in the walkway that connects the Grand Concourse and the Lakeside Center.

gia is more than an awards program. Representing retailing excellence around the world, it is part of a larger education initiative that includes seminars by retail experts, columns in international housewares publications and educational sessions at events in sponsors' home countries.

For more information about the gia (Global Innovation Award) program, the co-sponsors, or participating in 2015-2016, contact Piritta Törrö at piritta.torro@inspiredconnection.fi. Additional information on the gia program is also available online at www.housewares.org/gia.

*Editor's note: Images of the 2014-2015 national gia winner stores are available for download at: <http://housewares.smugmug.com/Gia/2015-gia-winners-Press-Photos>
The password for the folder is "2015gia".*

To follow are short descriptions of the 2014-2015 national gia winners:

Argentina

ORGANIZZA - www.organizza.com.ar

Buenos Aires

Since 2012, visiting Organizza has been a unique experience due to passion poured into the company by the owners. Their eclectic selection of products combined with a stunning atmosphere make the experience special. Reclaimed wood, warm lighting and soothing music surround the products, which are conveniently arranged in defined areas such as kitchen, living, home office and storage. Special displays are created for seasons and holidays to creatively showcase products and to highlight the retailer's passion for design. Organizza is also committed to strong customer service and has employees who are well-trained and committed to demonstrating high-quality standards in all that they do. Organizza is the place where an entrepreneurial spirit, eclectic products and customer satisfaction converge to create a unique customer experience.

Australia

Koskela - www.koskela.com.au

Sydney

Housed in a 2,000 square meter (21,500 ft²), light-filled, 100-year-old warehouse, Koskela is the go-to destination for Australian designed and ethically made products for the home. The Sydney space includes everything for the house from kitchen, cleaning, gardening, rugs and art to the junior's section, which includes a curated selection of science and nature-based toys and games. Koskela's Australian made furniture is featured in homes and many of Australia's leading corporations seeking to create innovative workspaces for staff. When visiting, be sure to wander through the medicinal garden before dining at the award-winning café that focuses on locally grown, seasonal produce.

Koskela—great design with a social conscience.

Brazil

Presentes Rodriguez - www.presentesrodriguez.com.br

Santo André, SP

Presentes Rodriguez, located in the heart of the city of Santo Andre, was founded in 2011 by two young brothers of the Rodriguez family who are known for their entrepreneurial spirit and passion towards home building. Designed by a renowned Brazilian architect, Presentes Rodriguez's physical store is over 1,000 square meters (10,700 ft²) and strives to provide a great shopping experience to its customers both in person and online.

Presentes Rodriguez's philosophy is easy—offering quality products at a fair price through high-class customer service in a magical setting. All in all, through innovation, the store has become a leader in housewares with rapid market expansion and national recognition.

Canada

Hudson's Bay - www.thebay.com

Toronto

Canada's oldest department store chain, Hudson's Bay Company, has made a dramatic move into the future of retail with the opening of Home on Seven in the spring of 2014. The entire seventh floor of the iconic flagship in Toronto is now devoted to housewares, tabletop and small appliances, anchored by a gorgeous gift registry, a Godiva chocolate shop and the spectacular new Kleinfeld Bridal Boutique—a first in the country. The center aisle of the casual dining department is designed to resemble a market street, with seasonal displays that inspire customers at every turn. The objective was to enhance and build on the bridal experience by grouping all relevant businesses in one beautifully coordinated space. With creative vignettes enticing customers to explore “trend zones” throughout the floor, Home on Seven transforms the bride's shopping experience into something unforgettable.

China

MLILY Home - www.mlily.com

Shanghai

For more than 11 years, MLILY Home, the leading supplier of memory foam products, has been committed to bringing its customers a comfortable sleep experience. This Shanghai-based company's ultimate mission is to create stress free and healthier lives for people who live in a fast-paced metropolitan environment. When visiting one of the 200 MLILY Home stores, customers can find products to help them relax and have a good night's rest. And, shopping from home is also an enjoyable experience through MLILY Home's online store.

Colombia

Mettler - www.mettler.com.co

Pasto

Since the arrival of a Swiss couple in Nariño in 1904 and the foundation of the company, Casa Mettler has evolved to be a reference for many products including housewares and kitchenware. Customers can find everything needed for their home or business. The store places extra emphasis on special occasions throughout the year such as graduations, weddings, birthdays, anniversaries and Christmas. Through a strong credit program, businesses can be started and maintained with products sourced from Mettler. Consumers also benefit through programs that allow payments to be made over time. People have known for generations that Casa Mettler

not only offers products of excellent quality but also provides advice and technical expertise to consumers. This cornerstone, on which the business was built, has remained consistent through the years.

Denmark

MUNK - www.munkshop.dk

Copenhagen

Since its opening in April 2012, *MUNK* has strived to present its customers with the newest trends in decoration and furnishings, while maintaining a traditional and personal approach to service. Starting in a humble sales space of 110 square meters (1,200 ft²), the business now also consists of an online shop (*Munkshop.dk*) as well as a production house (*MUNK collective*).

Everything is planned and managed by Hans Peter Munk, who handpicks the products to fit his own personal tastes. *MUNK* has quickly gathered a significant following of loyal customers, some local and some from much further away. *MUNK collective* launched its first product at the end of last year, and with 150 shops now carrying their products worldwide, *MUNK* has expanded far beyond the homey confines of its flagship store.

Eastern Europe

KITCHENSHOP - www.pentrugatit.ro

Afumati, Romania

Established in 2008 and selling through 15 retail stores, KitchenShop is one of the largest and most influential retail companies in Eastern Europe specializing in cooking products. KitchenShop understands that a powerful brand is built by people, for people. KitchenShop's management believes that the business strategy, corporate values, branding and product offering are linked together. The final element of this business equation is provided by the unconditional support offered by employees, the people who represent the company and brand to the consumer. All of this comes together to leave customers with a strong, clear and memorable impression.

France

Oh my Kitchen! - www.ohmykitchen.com

Levallois-Perret

The Oh my Kitchen! store is the first interactive, culinary concept-store in France! When customers arrive, they enter a soothing environment—one that feels like their own home. With a unique collection of items, utensils and products, shoppers simply cannot leave empty handed. In order to achieve this environment, everything has been designed to awaken the five senses. Consumers are free to experience and compare any and all of the products while

getting information from passionate experts—all the ingredients needed to heighten senses and motivate purchases.

Germany

Bärle am Friedrichsplatz - www.baerle-friedrichsplatz.de

Bruchsal

Bärle am Friedrichsplatz, now in its third generation of ownership, is a true family business. The family and professional team work closely together and for decades have established the Bärle am Friedrichsplatz name as a trusted partner and destination for its customers. With the aim of creating a true shopping experience with great atmosphere, inspiration and product knowledge, customers travel to Bärle from surrounding cities to experience the store's unique offering that cannot be found elsewhere. And with the renovation of the shop complete in 2014, Bärle is confident this goal will be achieved for the next generation while playing a vital part in keeping the local city center alive and attractive.

India

Home Centre - www.homecentrestores.com

Bangalore

From the first store in 1995 until today, Home Centre as a brand and organization has evolved by keeping the dynamic market and the needs and requirements of consumers in mind. Today, the brand is present in 10 countries with a total retail space of over 325,000 square meters (3.5 million ft²). In India, there is a total of 18 stores found in all major cities. Home Centre presents its customers with a great selection of furniture, modular kitchens and household items, which are known for international designs and high quality. Home Centre aims to be the preferred shopping destination in the home segment by delivering outstanding value, continuous innovation and exceptional customer service.

Ireland

Stock Design

Dublin

For more than forty years, Stock Design has led the way in independent homewares retailing in Dublin. Throughout that time, owner Brendan Fagan has sourced new and innovative products from around the world and declares that he has 'never had a boring day in retail!' From cookshop, tabletop and giftware ranges to textiles and soft furnishings—it's all here in a beautiful setting. Oozing charm and passion, it's little wonder that the store has attracted three generations of loyal customers, each in search of the unique, the practical, the inspirational...or a mixture of all three!

Italy

Contini - www.continiappia.com

Rome

Located in the heart of Rome, Contini is a retail leader in home furnishings, jewelry, tableware and kitchenware. Founded in 1958, Contini is housed in a two-story building with over 800 square meters (8,600 ft²) of space. Today, the retailer works with the most important and leading brands representing a fine balance of tradition and innovation. Every single item selected for sale expresses *creation* and transmits *emotion* through a story. Contini perfectly fits all of their shop windows with a master's touch and attention to detail, using the same attention to create amazing displays. Contini honors their history by continuing to develop with passion and creativity, striving to spread its fame in Italy and all over the world.

Japan

IDÉE - www.ideo.co.jp/shop

Tokyo

Based in Tokyo, IDÉE's 13 stores sell original furniture and a variety of home accessories. The stores take on four formats, depending on location and the target audience: IDÉE Shop, IDÉE Shop Variété, Délier IDÉE and Attachéd IDÉE. In addition to the retail stores, IDÉE is also passionate about meeting customers' needs through an integrated website, special events and through an artfully created publication.

Although continuing on with their rich heritage thirty years after its start, IDÉE began a cooperative effort with MUJI in 2006 to offer another new and unique retail experience. IDÉE believes in people's creativity and makes their best effort to stimulate the "aesthetics" inside.

Middle East

THE One Total Home Experience - www.theone.com

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

From humble beginnings in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates in 1996, THE One Total Home Experience has become a leading home fashion brand, well-known throughout the Middle East, with 18 stores across eight countries. Loved for being both magical and meaningful, THE One inspires customers with their "Always Different, Affordable Luxury" products, while engaging them to change the world through various corporate social responsibility initiatives. THE One sees their stores as theaters, where they put on dramatic seasonal home fashion shows and offer customers an entertaining and ever-changing, total sensory adventure. THE One is a place where customers can experience innovative décor trends, listen to hand-picked music, discover exotic home fragrances and enjoy fusion food in relaxed in-store cafés...in short, customers feel THE One's soul!

Netherlands

Coolblue - www.coolblue.nl

Rotterdam

Coolblue is the company behind more than 320 internet shops and seven physical stores in the Netherlands and Belgium. The Kitchen & Tableware division sells an extensive range of cooking utensils and tableware through more than 50 specialty webshops. Coolblue believes in specialization and is obsessively focused on customer satisfaction. The company's primary goal is to make customers smile—immediately or after a while. But at Coolblue, it's all in the service details as they don't charge for shipping, and text messages are sent as soon as orders have been completed. Sunday delivery is also available so their customers can enjoy their purchases as quickly as possible. And, all consumer questions are answered via social media within 30 minutes. Making customers happy? It's part of the Coolblue DNA.

New Zealand

The Design Depot - www.thedesigndepot.co.nz

Hamilton

Since their opening in 2012, The Design Depot's quick and remarkable success resulted in the store footprint doubling in size to 500 square meters (5,400 ft²). This edgy inspiration store, stocking furniture, homewares, lighting and bed linen, is every homeowner's dream. Exclusive local and global brands are expertly and creatively merchandised to inspire and showcase quality.

Specializing in design consultations, product sourcing and in-home "try before you buy" services, The Design Depot brings uniqueness to every home with every purchase. Backed by exceptional customer service, it is easy to see why The Design Depot is a frequent winner of local and national awards for outstanding retail excellence. The Design Depot is simply the destination for those requiring a regular inspirational fix.

Poland

Dobroteka - www.dobroteka.pl

Dobrodzień

Dobroteka is a unique space in Poland, a place where customers can realize their dreams about their home. Dobroteka organizes lectures and workshops about design to help customers make the best choices. The 3,000 square meters (32,300 ft²) of display space allows customers to find a solution for every part of their home. Customers can use products and quickly find answers to questions to help determine their exact choice. With over 200 years tradition, Dobroteka offers opportunities for customers to realize their interior and outdoor dreams.

Russia

Torgoviy Dom KWESTOR LLC - www.dom-vsevnem.ru

Moscow

KWESTOR was established in 2005 with the main business being the wholesale sale of kitchen utensils and souvenirs. In 2008, the company expanded and started selling housewares and home decor, and three subsidiaries in Russia were opened. And in 2013, KWESTOR's first retail store opened with six locations now serving customers.

In order to gain a competitive advantage, KWESTOR's goal was to introduce new items that featured interesting innovation and design into the Russian market. With initial product launches being successful with strong interest from Russian media, further development continues with the goal of finding new and interesting products for the Russian consumer, making lives more enjoyable and interesting.

South Africa

Metelerkamps - www.metelerkamps.co.za

Knysna

Metelerkamps stands out among the other mass marketers of kitchenware as a very unique and unusual store displaying and selling a huge variety of well-known kitchen and household brands. Their in-store displays are captivating and entice even casual shoppers to linger and enjoy the moment. Most of their merchandise is not found in other stores and definitely not found in the major chains. The specialty sections of the business, such as fireplaces and high-end appliances, complement their range. Metelerkamps online store mirrors the retail showroom in Knysna with a wide range of delectable goodies. Metelerkamps loves that their customers love their store!

Turkey

JUMBO - www.jumbo.com.tr

Istanbul

"Every Turkish home must have Jumbo" was the motto first used when this retailer embarked on its journey in 1947. Since that time, Jumbo has become known as the source for functional, durable, original and high-quality products.

Jumbo's unique product range, including cutlery, porcelain, glassware, cookware and household accessories, is presented to customers in a warm and inviting atmosphere with lacquered display surfaces combined with stainless steel, leather and natural wooden materials to emphasize special features of the products.

Jumbo is a leading Turkish brand that sets trends through simple, stylish, innovative, functional and timeless designs.

United Kingdom

John Lewis - www.johnlewis.com

London

From its start in 1864, John Lewis has grown to become the most successful department store in the UK, today stocking more than 350,000 separate lines. Their unique structure as a partnership has given John Lewis a visionary and successful way of doing business, putting the happiness of Partners at the center of everything. This idea has created a different sort of company, owned by Partners, who are dedicated to serving customers with flair and fairness. Coupled with this, the John Lewis buying team strives to bring their customers an exciting and differentiated assortment, with a market-leading private label assortment complemented by exclusive ranges from international brands. All of this combined makes John Lewis a company that customers trust and love.

Uruguay

Vivai - www.vivai.com.uy

Montevideo

Created in 1975, Vivai is a well-known company that is dedicated to interior design, decor and home products. Thanks to continual efforts to provide customers with the best quality, highest design and latest style, Vivai has emerged as a leading retailer.

Vivai has created a world full of experiences, full of smells, sounds, feelings, tastes and textures. The four retail stores provide a stunning backdrop for their customers to explore and enjoy new products. Historically, an adventurous and innovative spirit makes Vivai constantly seek new horizons. The company is proud of its role in Uruguayan history and looks forward to being part of this country's future through the continued contribution of designs that make everyday households more beautiful.

USA

Marcel's Culinary Experience - www.marcelsculinaryexperience.com

Glen Ellyn, IL

Since opening in September 2011, Marcel's Culinary Experience has become a destination for epicures throughout the greater Chicago area. Former insurance executive Jill Foucré founded this combination gourmet retail store and cooking school, which she named after her grandfather, a French chef and restaurateur. The 220 square meter (2,400 ft²) store features top brands in cookware, gadgets, small kitchen electrics, tableware and textiles. The cooking school offers more than 200 classes and 100 private events each year for home cooks of all ages and skill levels. Artfully displayed merchandise, an expert staff and talented chef team combine to create a warm and inviting destination.

USA

Wayfair - *www.wayfair.com*

Boston, MA

Founded in 2002 and based in Boston, Wayfair is transforming the way people shop online for their homes by creating one of the world's largest online destinations.

Through e-commerce sites, Wayfair offers compelling merchandising, easy product discovery, attractive prices and even visually inspiring browsing for over seven million products from over 7,000 suppliers across five distinct brands: Wayfair.com, Joss & Main, AllModern, DwellStudio and Birch Lane.

Wayfair is committed to offering consumers a vast selection, easy access and value, inspirational content, personalized and mobile shopping experiences and superior customer service to help them find the perfect item at a price they can afford.