

The *Retail Observer*

February, 2008

The Monthly News Magazine With Personality

Vol.19, Issue 2

PRESS RELEASE

WORLD DEBUT: MIELE INTRODUCES NEW MASTERCOOL™ REFRIGERATION LINE

SETTING A NEW STANDARD FOR FOOD AND WINE
PRESERVATION APPLIANCES IN NORTH AMERICA

PRINCETON, New Jersey, February 2008—A feast for the eyes... Miele's new MasterCool™ collection is poised to set a new standard for American food and wine preservation appliances. A recognized leader



Miele

Anything else is a compromise

in European appliance design, Miele will debut its first North American refrigerators, freezers and wine coolers to consumers in March 2008. MasterCool embodies Miele's legendary quality and innovation... from its high performance dual-cooling system and intuitive MasterCool™ touch controls to its patented Wi-Fi RemoteVision™ technology that delivers total peace of mind as it protects valuable food and wine investments.

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Evening of Excellence

Honoring the remodeling industry's best



2008 REGIONAL CONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

It is with great pleasure we announce the 2008 Regional Contractor of the Year award winners. Seventeen judges worked almost two days evaluating 530 incredible projects.

Regional winners will be honored and the National winners and NARI Achievement Award winners will be announced at the Evening of Excellence, March 15, 2008, at the Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront Hotel.

Please join us as we recognize all winners at this spectacular gala.

And the 2008 Regional winners are...

RESIDENTIAL KITCHEN UNDER \$30,000

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Region V - Natalie Howe Design - Austin, TX

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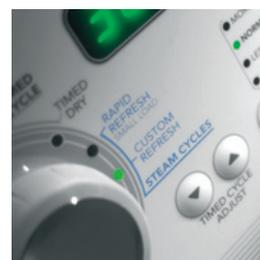


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Celebrating Our 19th Year!

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TECHNOLOGY OR BUST

As I sit here watching the Super Bowl on my outdated two year old 55" LCD rear projection 1080i Sony WEGA, I realize that it's time for a change. After seeing the new 108" and 150" plasmas at the CES, I have to either get rid of my custom wall unit or find a new house. Since that won't happen, I plan on keeping the bond I have built with my current viewing option for a while longer. I do remember years ago before VCR, DVR, PIP, HD, Cable, Satellite and Internet my dad and I would sit down to watch football on our 27" Kmart brand console TV with built in radio, cassette, record player and the big upgrade, an 8 Track tape deck complete with gold velour covered speakers! Ahh... those where the days. We would take turns adjusting the rabbit ears to get rid of the snow on the TV and I always acted as the remote control for Dad to switch the TV station.

I remember my Mom buying the first Mitsubishi 42" rear projection TV from Federated (Intelelevision never looked so grand). What a beast that was. We got rid of a good portion of the living room furniture to make room for it. The picture quality was terrible and the snow flakes grew ever so much bigger. With the introduction of cable TV, the snow went away and PIP (picture in picture) became all the rage. Gone were the days of gathering all the TV's in the house and lining them up to watch the College Bowl games. The only snow we watched now was a real snow storm happening live during the East Coast and Midwest games. Then along came the VHS/Beta battle, with VHS as the victor, allowing us to now record a show and watch it later... what a concept. Ahh... those where the days.

By this time I was out of the house and started my own journey down technology lane. I started small with a 24" color TV and progressed to a 36" Panasonic tube TV with four additional screens of PIP. I was the envy of all my friends. We were able to watch a TV show, a movie, and a sporting event and still play games without having to get up, except for beer breaks. The DVD replaced VHS, which was preceded by laser disc. To think that a silicon wafer allowed me to get rid of all my cassettes, VHS tapes, 8 Tracks and vinyl, what a new concept. Along came PlayStation which replaced every outdated game console that I owned (sorry Atari). Ahh... those where definitely the days.

When we remodeled the house two and a half years ago, I bought my first 42" plasma screen for the bedroom and a 55" LCD rear projection TV for the family room complete with a PlayStation 2, a multi-disc DVD, Cable On-Demand with DVR, all with complete built-in surround sound. With that said, I know what a lot of you are thinking... "How archaic is this guy?" and you know, you're right, I am. Our home system is already outdated as technology flies ahead so incredibly fast it leaves your head spinning. How are we to keep up with the amazing advancements in technology that are moving at the speed of light? We now have super slim plasmas (3/4" to 1.5"), Blu-ray and HD DVDs and 1080P projectors with integrated systems holding thousands of movies. We also have I-Pods that can integrate with your home automated systems and mobile phones that can communicate and control your household electronic functions from a distance. Imagine... turning on the oven to cook dinner with a call from your cell phone... Gone are the days of simplicity. Today the imagination combined with technology is changing our daily reality in the blink of an eye. Ahh... these are the days.

Moe Lastfogel



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“Our patented MasterCool™ control system beautifully merges accessibility, functionality and design,” states Matthew Kueny, Senior Product Manager for Miele, Inc. “Since most users never know the proper settings to correctly preserve fruits, vegetables and other perishables, the Miele MasterCool™ controls automatically optimize the SmartFresh™ storage drawers by varying the humidity levels and precise temperatures. The controls are conveniently located for all users, regardless of height, and our clear food-driven descriptions (dairy, meat, fruit, etc.) make using them as simple as a touch of a button.”

“Our research indicated that customers want to be able to see every area of their refrigerator,” continues Kueny. “Our innovative ClearView™ design washes the entire unit in bright, clean light using a sophisticated blend of spot halogens (to highlight items) and an indirect parabolic reflector. These major advances combined with our adjustable Drop and Lock™ shelving system, FullView™ completely extendable drawers and the signature design and styling associated with Miele products makes the MasterCool™ refrigeration line the coolest available.”

NOTEWORTHY FEATURES INCLUDE:

MasterCool Controls Lock in Freshness

Meat, cheese, produce even seafood, all demand a unique environmental storage condition in order to keep them fresh and flavorful. Milk, for example, is stored perfectly at 40oF, while vegetables require a temperature just above freezing. When it comes to humidity control, meat, fish, dairy and deli last longer in a drier environment than fruits and vegetables. In reality, most homeowners are unfamiliar with how to properly set these levels given the ambiguity of user controls. That’s history. When Miele’s MasterCool control system is activated, the user is greeted with a food-driven menu system that is easy to view, understand and adjust for each of its four independent cooling zones within the cabinet. This intuitive functionality helps to create and maintain the optimum conditions required for specific food categories so freshness is locked in.

Dual Compressor System Keeps Ice and Water Fresh

Icemaker and water/ice dispensing units deliver a truly refreshing drink thanks to Miele’s dual compressor system. All Miele preservation appliances (not only select models) have a dedicated cooling system responsible for each interior compartment guaranteeing the refrigerator and freezer—even if they are housed in a single product like a bottom mount appliance—do not exchange air. This technology eliminates flavor transfer so the salmon stored in the refrigerator doesn’t affect the quality of the ice cubes

RemoteVision™ Protects Food & Wine Investments

If a family member accidentally left the door ajar to a refrigerator, freezer or wine cooler before leaving for a weekend get-away or if a critical cooling component was to malfunction without detection, the loss and inconvenience would be extensive, especially if storing a valued wine collection or high-quality meats and seafood. With Miele’s innovative RemoteVision™ homeowners will enjoy complete peace of mind, eliminating this anxiety.

Using Miele’s proprietary wireless local area network (WLAN) technology and application software, enabled products will have a 24/7 connection to Miele’s monitoring center. This “virtual link” is established

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allowing a secured transmission of vital temperature and performance data. If a significant fault occurs, Miele's client service center will be notified and contact the homeowner or another trusted individual identified on their call roster in order to gain access to the home and fix the problem immediately. By the end of 2008, this technology will be extended to many of Miele's appliances including dishwashers, ovens, coffee systems, washing machines and tumble dryers.

ClearView™ Sheds Light Everywhere

Miele's exclusive ClearView™ lighting system illuminates every nook of the interior cabinet on each level to achieve maximum exposure of all contents. ClearView™ applies uniquely engineered halogen lamps that cascade light from the top and sides of the appliance, eliminating blind or dark areas. Even those items tucked in the rear of a fully stocked refrigerator, concealed by large catering platters or nestled in the storage drawers are in ClearView™.

FullView™ Extends Drawers Completely

FullView™ storage drawers are built from top-quality materials to ensure stability as they fully extend providing an unobstructed view and easy access to contents. FullView™ is a built-in benefit found in all MasterCool™ appliances... refrigerators, freezers and wine coolers.

SmartFresh™ Preserves Foods Longer

SmartFresh™ drawers are customizable to store and preserve food at the perfect temperature and humidity requirements. Users select the drawer location and food type (dairy, meat, vegetables, etc.); from the MasterCool™ menu system and Miele's signature electronics adjust and maintain the ideal conditions so food is fresher and nutritious longer.

Super Cool Gives Warmed Up Groceries a Boost to the Right Temperature

After stocking either compartment with a significant load of new groceries, including bulky items like fresh poultry or large party platters, engaging Super Cool will override the thermostat and begin cooling the cabinet to a reduced temperature... 35°F in the refrigerator and -22°F in the freezer. Super Cool will continue working to achieve these lowered temperatures for a period of 6 or 52 hours (for the refrigerator and freezer respectively) until it reaches this exact degree or it's manually disengaged. The result... an accelerated cooling process designed to lock in freshness, taste and texture.

Drop and Lock™ Adjustable Shelves

Adjusting shelves and bins on the door and inside the appliance cabinet is a simple one-handed operation. Miele's convenient Drop and Lock™ system keeps each unit firmly aligned on its slide-rail framework so an easy

"tilt up and slide motion" is all it takes to move the unit higher or lower. Once the desired position is located, simply drop the shelf and watch it automatically lock safely into place.

A floating deli drawer in the refrigerator and unique divider system in the freezer compartment add to the overall flexibility. Both effortlessly glide across shelves or within bins to maximize storage efficiencies.

Stability Hinge™ Eliminates Sagging Doors

Miele products are known the world over for their robust construction. Fully-loaded, with food items on the inside and an elaborate, decorative custom panel on the outside, these hinges are capable of carrying a collective load of over 200 pounds and are tested for over 200,000 door cycles... that's twice the industry standard! This stamina ensures the door will stay stable, secure and won't sag over time.

TLC Installation System™ is Gentler to Fine Homes

After understanding the challenges installers undertake when securing counter-depth refrigerator or wine cooler units, Miele developed the TLC Installation System™ to make mounting MasterCool™ products a job easy enough for one technician to handle. Key to this system's success are unique height adjustable rear wheels for smooth steering of the appliance. These high-quality wheels limit possible floor damage and are adjustable for final mounting from the front of the appliance. Additionally, a convenient ladder bracket makes the installation of any panel, stainless steel or custom cabinetry, a snap. The TLC Installation System™: an industry first to save time, labor and costs during the delivery and installation of cooling appliances.

Wine Coolers Precisely Preserve and Protect

Abrupt, or even subtle, changes in storage temperatures can dramatically affect the quality of wine. Miele's MasterCool™ electronic controls help ensure that temperature fluctuations will not occur. Three unique cooling zones, each with independent controls, are available to store or temper champagne and wine (white or red) at their ideal environmental condition. For instance, the bottom zone can be set to store wine between 45°F - 64°F then be moved up to a tempering zone and held at a prescribed temperature in preparation for the next occasion. White wines and champagnes can be conveniently housed in the third zone, as they require much cooler temperatures.

Regardless of the cooling zone, each bottle is gently cradled on one of 14 shelves made of high-quality acacia wood. Two of these shelves are fixed in place to separate the cooling zones... the rest are FullView™ extendable shelves that make viewing and accessing bottles very easy.

| *continued on page 28*

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ENTIRE HOUSE \$250,000 TO \$500,000

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BERTAZZONI CELEBRATES 125 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE WITH LIMITED EDITION HERITAGE SERIES

TIMELESS DESIGN, PRECISION ENGINEERING REFLECT CRAFTSMANSHIP
PERFECTED OVER THE COURSE OF A CENTURY

GUASTALLA, Italy (January 22, 2008) — Bertazzoni, the leading Italian manufacturer of precision-engineered kitchen lifestyle products, is commemorating its 125-year anniversary a limited edition Heritage Series of gas ranges. Drawing inspiration from the original Bertazzoni wood burning stoves, the Heritage Series was designed with the classic appeal of traditional styling, while incorporating the advanced technology and sophisticated engineering upon which Bertazzoni has built its legacy.

“Today, more than a century after the family business began, Bertazzoni ovens and ranges are exported to more than 60 countries around the world – carrying with them the passion, precision and unique culinary traditions the company was founded upon,” shared Paolo Bertazzoni, the company’s fifth generation president. “We are pleased to introduce the exclusive Heritage Series to our existing array of product offerings, in honor and celebration of 125 years of innovation and excellence.”

THE HERITAGE SERIES UNVEILED

Embodying all of the elegance of its rich European legacy, the colorful 36-inch Heritage Series gas ranges come in three matte colors, black, burgundy and cream. Features include stainless steel worktops, different size burners for accuracy and versatility; a child safety ignition system; easy controls; and flexible and accurate cooking performance. Each range carries the signature of Antonio Bertazzoni, the son of company founder Francesco Bertazzoni. Antonio’s signature is a symbol of familial pride, as he was the man whose energy and imagination made Bertazzoni wood burning stoves popular throughout Italy at the turn of the last century.

The Heritage Series includes the following features:

- Exclusive triple-ring burners provide high-efficiency power with a delicate low-simmer function
- Six different sized burners that enable cooking versatility
- Best-in-class one-piece worktop styling with uniquely sealed burners and a seamless surface for quick and easy clean-up
- Heavy-duty cast iron grates which allow easy movement of any kind of pot
- Wok adapter and simmer plate
- Special child-safe valves on all burners to stop gas flow if the flame goes out – even in a power outage
- Easy one-touch ignition systems
- Balanced airflow fans to provide even heat distribution for single- and multi-level roasting and baking without flavor crossover
- Capable of being used traditionally or as a convection oven
- Settings include dehydration at thermostat-controlled low temperature, and fan-only defrosting
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WOMAN OF THE MONTH— MARY ANN FALKENBERG, CKD

BY DICK ROHLAND

She greets everyone she meets with a warm smile, sparkling eyes and pleasant conversation. These are all attributes, no doubt, that have helped make Mary Ann Falkenberg, CKD, successful in a competitive industry. You could also say that Falkenberg, with 25 years behind her, is close to being a pioneer in a remodeling world that focuses mostly on kitchen and bath design. However, in her words, moving into kitchen and bath design as a career was more an act of “fate” rather than choice. Growing up near Rochester, Minnesota, home of the Mayo Clinic, and one of the biggest employers in the area, Falkenberg naturally began a career in the hospital industry with training in the Neurophysiology Department of the Mayo Clinic. Falkenberg eventually ended up in Illinois, managing the professional services departments in several different hospitals. After spending 15 years in the hospital industry, she felt a tug to go back to college and pursue an interior design degree. At the time, she believed she could combine both her hospital experience and interior design skills toward future hospital renovations. However, her step of “fate” into the kitchen design industry intervened from Triton College the school sent her to a in Niles, Illinois for an

Falkenberg accepted family run design and Bath Mart and has so fortunate for that step. The old saying, ‘if you will never work a day in berg remarked. “They, were great mentors and me. I owe much of my to that family.” Falken- to Minnesota for family



MARY ANN FALKENBERG, CKD

when she graduated and the chairman of kitchen and bath dealer interview.

that position with a retail firm called Kitchen never looked back. “I feel of ‘fate.’ I love what I do. love what you do,’ you you life applies,” Falken- (Kitchen and Bath Mart) were an inspiration to success in this business berg eventually returned reasons and settled in at

North Star Kitchens for the last five years. As the name applies, North Star Kitchens primarily focuses on kitchen design and remodeling. It is owned by North Star Kitchens, LLC and managed by John Sacarelos. The showroom, located in the International Market Square in Minneapolis has 10 kitchen vignettes artfully laid out in 3,000 square feet of floor space. It employs four designers, three technical assistants, a construction manager and a receptionist. It is a full service design firm that keeps five cabinet installation crews busy, Falkenberg noted. The cabinet installers bring high praise from Falkenberg: “The cabinet installers do a beautiful job!” Falkenberg exclaimed. “Their molding and trim just come together beautifully.” Falkenberg’s warmth for people, which she said is a carry over from her days in the hospital industry, is apparent. It is this warmth and making people feel at ease that underlies her general philosophy.

“You try to suit the client, make the kitchen function, make it aesthetically beautiful, make it fit the client’s personality,” Falkenberg explained. “It’s not what a designer decides. It needs to blend in with who they (the client) are.” “Somebody once told me that our job is to help the client buy a kitchen and bottom line; that’s what it is all about.”

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CAMBRIA HOSTS NKBA MINNESOTA CHAPTER HOLIDAY PARTY

BY DICK ROHLAND

The Cambria Concept Studio located in the International Market Square in Minneapolis hosted a well attended Holiday gathering for the Minnesota Chapter of the NKBA. Cambria brought in Surdyk's Liquor and Cheese Shop, Minneapolis for a hearty variety of fine wines and cheese appetizers prior to the evening dinner of chicken and beef tenderloin catered by D'Amicos, also from Minneapolis.

The local chapter set aside the evening strictly for fun and socializing and give its members time to sit back and enjoy the company of their peers in the industry.

Lisa Weck, treasurer of the local chapter and showroom manager for the Minneapolis Cambria Concept Studio was on hand to show case the showroom and coordinate the evening festivities.

Cambria quartz is manufactured from a sprawling plant, located in LeSueur, MN. It is the only quartz manufacturing facility of its kind in the United States. This plant produces quartz surfacing in three color collections. They are the Quarry Collection™, the Desert Collection™ and the Classic Collection.

"The Cambria Concept Studio in Minneapolis is a showcase of the beauty and function of Cambria," explained Lisa. "Twelve vignettes show Cambria quartz surfaces in a variety of applications from kitchen and bathroom counters to fireplace surrounds."

Of the annual Holiday party, Lisa remarked that "Cambria is pleased to host events for professionals in the kitchen and bath industry, such as the NKBA. The Holiday Party was a great opportunity to showcase the beauty and style of Cambria." **RO**



Brant McManigle, Filament Lighting, St. Louis Park, MN with Charles Moore, owner of the Stool Store, Bloomington, MN.



A big thank you from the Minnesota NKBA quests attending the annual Minnesota NKBA Holiday Party to Lisa Weck, Cambria Concept Studio showroom manager who moved into high gear to sign in guests and coordinated the evening's activities. She even took time to graciously pose for this photo at the entrance to the store.



One of many vignettes in the Minneapolis Cambria Concept Studio featuring a large variety of Cambria quartz products.



Linda LaFrenier, House of Dreams, Shoreview, MN; Robin Ray, AKIBD, Sawyer Design Build, Minnetonka, MN; Terri Head, Kitchen Designs by Terri, Rosemount, MN with husband Brad.



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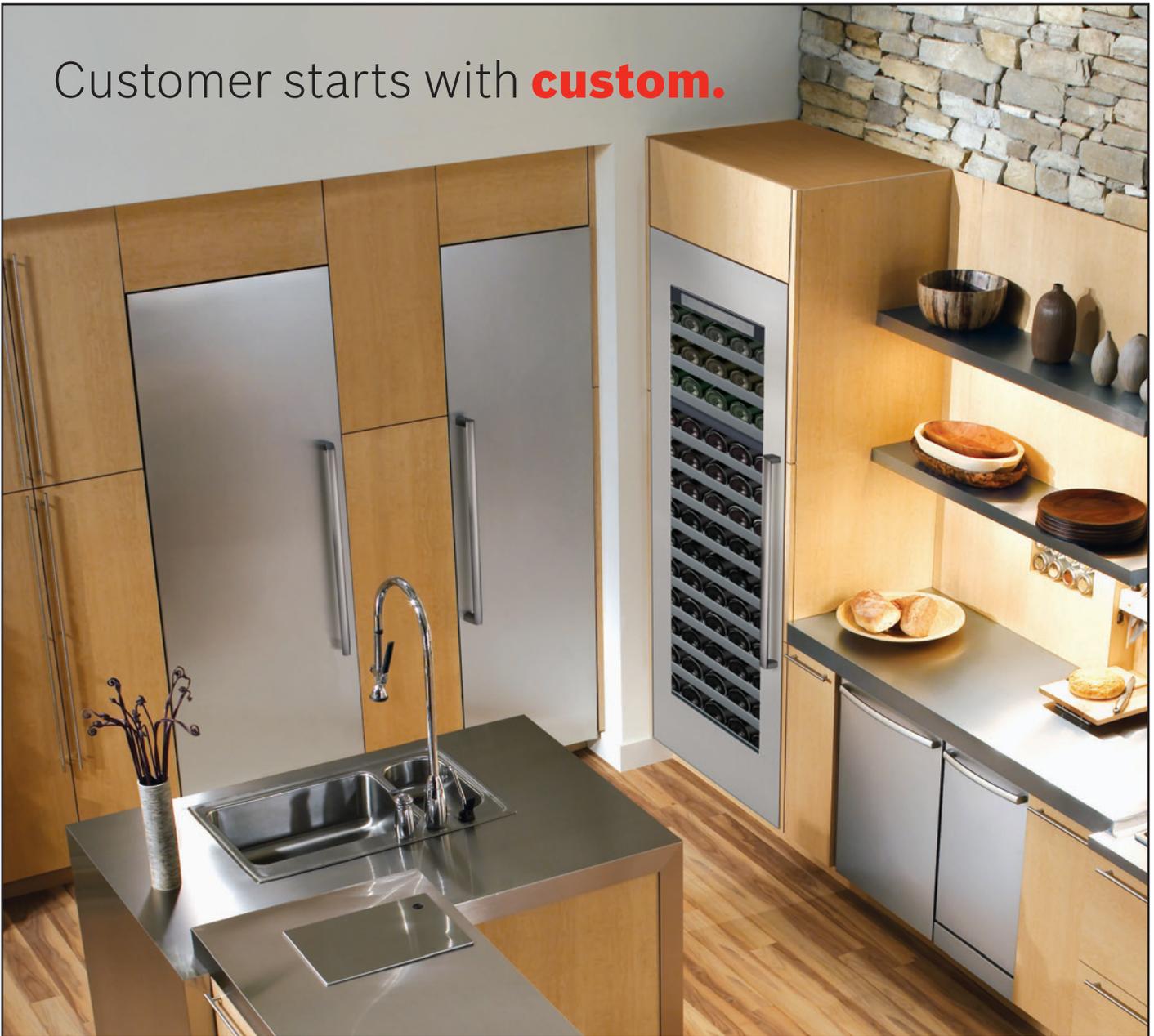
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18", 24" Wine cooler

DACOR LAUNCHES INTERACTIVE WEBSITE

REDESIGNED SITE IS EASIER TO NAVIGATE AND FULLY IMMERSSES VISITORS IN THE ULTIMATE DACOR COOKING EXPERIENCE

DIAMOND BAR, Calif. – January 8, 2008 – Dacor®, market leader in luxury kitchen appliance design, manufacturing and distribution, today announced the launch of the company's new website at dacor.com. The redesigned site, scheduled to go live today, features comprehensive product information and rich imagery that reflect the brand's ongoing commitment to innovative product design.

Enhanced interactive tools, brilliant photography and easy navigation are at the core of the website's changes. Dacor's dedication to details is apparent throughout the site, which is filled with close-up product shots and better-quality zoom capabilities, which highlight unique design details that set the brand apart from its competitors.

"Many consumers do most of their research on the web before walking through a dealer's door, so, we designed a site that parallels with how consumers are using the Internet today," said Steve Joseph, Director of Interactive and Direct Marketing at Dacor. "Our new website features interactive tours that allow consumers to fully experience the product and includes comprehensive product details that give them all the knowledge needed to help them make their purchase."

Virtual showrooms offer design inspiration and new interactive modules help consumers visualize design flexibility and the freedom to change appliance and cabinet finishes with a few simple clicks. Users will have the ability to create personalized wish lists for quick reference when visiting their local dealer, which can be found with the easy to use dealer locator. Additionally, consumers can register their appliances online as well as enroll in the Dacor EASE extended warranty program.

The new website will also prove to be a valuable resource for consumers long after installation. Users can research and register for culinary events in their area, search for recipes, get cooking tips from celebrity chefs, and sign up to receive periodic e-newsletters for details on new Dacor products, design trends and other culinary news.

A special section dedicated to trade professionals offers access to the Dacor catalog for 20-20 Design™ planning software, an online specification library, downloadable product brochures and additional links to online tools to help better serve customers. Trade professionals will also have the ability to upload images of their best Dacor kitchens for possible inclusion in the online Design Gallery as well as sign up for an e-newsletter designed for the trade.

"With the launch of the new site, we have created a destination that offers existing and future Dacor owners, designers, dealers and builders a reliable resource for convenient answers to questions they may have for just about everything from how long to bake German Chocolate Cupcakes to installation specifications," continued Joseph. **RO**



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KOBE RANGE HOODS ANNOUNCE A NEW SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER FOR NORTH AMERICA



EL MONTE, CA January 14, 2008: KOBE Range Hoods would like to announce the addition of Marc Heffner to the staff. Mr. Heffner will be the new Sales & Marketing

Manager for North America. Mr. Heffner brings over 18 years of sales and marketing experience to KOBE Range Hoods. Most recently Mr. Heffner was the Western Regional Sales Manager for Broan-NuTone. In addition to Mr. Heffner's work experience he holds a Master's of Business Administration degree from Pepperdine University and degree in Mass Communication from the University of Utah.

Some of Mr. Heffner's duties will include managing KOBE Range Hoods growing network of distributors and dealers in both the United States and Canada.

Mr. Heffner is a native of Southern California and has strong roots to the area. Mr. Heffner is the father to 3 sons and is involved in both coaching and the Boy Scouts of America program.

Mr. Heffner's contact information is Marc.Heffner@KOBERangeHoods.com and his phone number is 626-350-1355 ext. 103. **RO**



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ROBERT PERRY JOINS PANASONIC CONSUMER ELECTRONICS AS SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT



(January 25, 2008: 06:32 PM EST) Panasonic, the market leader in Plasma HDTVs, announced today the appointment of Robert A. Perry as Senior Vice President of Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company effective January 28. Perry will be responsible for product marketing strategy and implementation across Panasonic's acclaimed line of VIERA® Plasma and LCD HDTVs.

Mr. Perry brings to Panasonic extensive marketing and sales industry experience, primarily in the Consumer Electronics industry.

"Bob Perry's wealth of experience in Consumer Electronics marketing will be a

tremendous asset to Panasonic as we continue to build market leadership for our VIERA flat panel HDTVs and brand," said Mr. Kitajima. "We are looking to Bob to help us drive strong marketing initiatives that will take Panasonic to new heights." **RO**



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STEVE BELL JOINS ALMO'S PRODUCT MANAGEMENT TEAM

ALMO APPOINTS STEVE BELL VICE PRESIDENT OF PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

PHILADELPHIA, PA – January 14, 2008: Almo Corporation, a leading U.S. distributor of consumer electronics and appliances, announced today that Steve Bell is joining Almo as Vice President of Product Management. In this position, Steve will lead the purchasing operations of Almo's Consumer Electronics and Appliance Groups and will report to Almo's Executive Vice President, Ed Gibbons.

"As our CE business continues to grow exponentially, we need to continually increase our expertise to ensure our continued success," said Warren Chaiken, President of Almo. "Steve certainly brings to Almo a wealth of industry experience, and as a Philadelphia native, he is thrilled to be moving 'home'."

Mr. Bell brings Almo over 36 years of CE industry experience in both distribution and retail operations. He began his career as Senior VP of Purchasing, Marketing and Retail Operations for Listening Booth/Wall to Wall Sound and Video; and for 15 years was employed in the capacity of General Manager of J&R Music and Computer World in NYC. Most recently, Steve held the position of Vice President of Purchasing for DBL Distributing. His experience also includes an entrepreneurial endeavor as the General Manager of Electronics Expo where he directed both the purchasing and marketing functions for this new retail operation. **RO**



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JOE DILLON JOINS ALMO'S SPECIALTY APPLIANCE DIVISION

INDUSTRY VETERAN, JOE DILLON, APPOINTED REGIONAL FIELD SALES MANAGER FOR THE SOUTHEAST TERRITORY FOR ALMO'S SPECIALTY APPLIANCE DIVISION

PHILADELPHIA, PA – January 16, 2008: Almo Corporation has appointed Joe Dillon as Regional Field Sales Manager for the Southeast territory for the company's Specialty Appliance Division. In this newly created position, Joe will direct the sales initiatives in the Southeast region reporting to Larry Feldman, Sr. Vice President of Sales.

"Joe brings to Almo over 18 years of experience in every channel of high-end luxury appliances," said Larry Feldman, Almo Sr. Vice President of Sales. "Joe's wealth of industry experience, intense work ethic and successful relationships with dealers enforces Almo's commitment to establish a strong Southeast region."

Joe's 18 years of experience spans the Builder Distributor, Manufacturer and Independent Distributor channels. In addition to sales management experience with luxury appliance brands Viking, Dacor, Asko, Zephyr and Perlick, Joe managed the Pompano and Tampa locations of Florida Builder Appliances. His outstanding proficiency with both luxury and major appliance brands including SubZero, Miele, Gaggenau, and more earned him the position of Sales Manager when FBA was purchased by Sears. Joe attended the University of South Florida and lives in the Miami area with his wife. **RO**

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is also important for long-term storage so that corks are kept moist. If wine is kept too long in a room with low humidity, the corks can dry out and will no longer seal the bottles effectively. Miele's dynamic cooling system ensures an even circulation of air and constant humidity so this problem is alleviated.

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In the introductory phase, the modular components for the refrigerator and freezer will come in classic 18", 30" and 36" width dimensions and the wine cooler in a 24" width. Height dimensions include 48", 54", 60", 66" and 72" depending on the product. In door water/ice dispensers are available on the freezer towers and bottom mount freezer configurations are offered. Retail prices are not yet set. **RO**

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PRESS RELEASE

EUROCHEF USA SIGNS DELONGHI MAJOR APPLIANCE LONG TERM CONTRACT

EuroChef USA Inc, a U.S. importer of Italian made Major Appliances has signed a new long-term agreement with Fisher & Paykel Appliance Italy SPA for continued exclusive U.S. Distribution of the DeLonghi Brand.

In a letter dated October 30, 2007, Stefano Baratelia stated: "We hereby confirm that the DeLonghi Brand of cooking products will be distributed exclusively in the United States by EuroChef USA. EuroChef has signed a long term contract with Fisher & Paykel and we have continued to support their efforts since we purchased the factory in Italy from the DeLonghi Group."

Today, EuroChef imports multi-brands of Appliances, including DeLonghi and sells through a network of ten regional distributors to every state in the union. Steve Weldon, Distributor Sales Manager for EuroChef stated "The DeLonghi major appliances are now offered in more than 350 storefronts across the U.S. and it continues to set the standard for quality, value and service."

The DeLonghi product line offers 24, 36 and 48-inch free standing SS ranges, wall ovens, cooktops and pro-hoods.

Dealer inquiries – please contact EuroChef USA at (866) 844-6566.
Mark Lubell—President, EuroChef USA **RO**



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- Region III* - B & E General Contractors, Inc. - Milwaukee, WI
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- Region V* - Key Renovations, Ltd. - North Richland Hills, TX
- Region VI* - Metke Remodeling & Woodworking, Inc. - Lake Oswego, OR
- Region VII* - Clayton Nelson & Associates - Los Gatos, CA

RESIDENTIAL HISTORICAL RENOVATION/RESTORATION

- Region I* - Gemmi Construction, Inc. - Doylestown, PA
- Region II* - Revival Construction, Inc. - Atlanta, GA
- Region III* - Stonehouse Designs, Inc. - Wayzata, MN
- Region IV* - Paulson's Construction, Inc. - Howell, MI
- Region V* - Provenance Properties - Dallas, TX
- Region VI* - Neil Kelly Design/Build Remodeling - Portland, OR

RESIDENTIAL UNIVERSAL DESIGN

- Region I* - R & M Construction Co. - Oaks, PA
With team member Lifestyles Design, LLC, Perkiomenville, PA
- Region II* - HammerSmith, Inc. - Decatur, GA
- Region IV* - Renovations Unlimited - Grove City, OH
- Region V* - Caulton Contracting - Dallas, TX
- Region VII* - Alward Construction Company, Inc. - Berkeley, CA

COMMERCIAL INTERIOR

- Region I* - J. Francis Company - Pittsburgh, PA
- Region II* - Bay Breeze Enterprises, Inc. - St Petersburg, FL
- Region III* - The Design Studio - Sioux Falls, SD

COMMERCIAL EXTERIOR

- Region III* - Jennings & Woldt Remodeling, Inc. - Sun Prairie, WI
- Region IV* - Murphy Home Improvement - Cincinnati, OH

COMMERCIAL SPECIALTY

- Region I* - J. Francis Company - Pittsburgh, PA
- Region III* - Brillo Home Improvements, Inc. - Milwaukee, WI
- Region V* - Graf Developments - Grand Prairie, TX
- Region VII* - Teevan Restoration - San Francisco, CA

HOME THEATER & MEDIA ROOMS UNDER \$150,000

- Region I* - Media Rooms, Inc. - West Chester, PA
- Region III* - JDJ Builders, Inc. - Milwaukee, WI

HOME THEATER & MEDIA ROOMS \$150,000 AND OVER

- Region I* - Brett King Builder Contractor, Inc. - Quakertown, PA
- Region VII* - Talmadge Construction, Inc. - Aptos, CA



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480.367.2910

**NORTH CENTRAL
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Steve Stremke
630.771.0344

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Jill Locklear
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Congratulations to all the winners. We look forward to seeing you in St Petersburg in March. **RO**



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SURVEY FINDS SUPPORT FOR “BUY LOCAL” BOOSTED HOLIDAY SPENDING AT INDEPENDENT STORES

CONDUCTED BY THE INDEPENDENT BUSINESS FORUM, A NEW COLLABORATIVE NETWORK OF ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (Jan. 23, 2008)—As major chains report weak holiday sales, a nationwide survey of 1,382 independent retailers has found that a desire to support locally owned businesses is emerging as a factor in people’s shopping choices.

The survey, which included retailers in all 50 states and Washington, D.C., found that, even in a difficult economic climate, many independent retailers are holding their own and even seeing sales gains by emphasizing their local ownership and community roots.

The survey found that independent retailers in cities with active “Buy Local” campaigns reported much larger increases in holiday sales on average than those in cities without such campaigns. In the last few years, “Buy Local” campaigns have been launched by local business alliances in more than three dozen communities. Independent retailers in these cities reported an average gain in sales of about 2% over the 2006 holiday season, while those in cities without “Buy Local” campaigns saw an increase of less than 0.5%. “People made a special effort to shop locally and were vocal about their support,” one retailer commented. Another reported: “Our customers are responding to hearing this message both locally and nationally.”

Eighty-two percent of the retailers surveyed said that the fact that their business is locally owned and independent matters to their customers. The survey was undertaken by the Independent Business Forum, a newly formed network of trade associations and other organizations that represent independent businesses. Participants in the forum are working together on issues of common concern to their members. NARDA is one of the founding members of the Independent Business Forum.

“NARDA is looking forward to being able to help our members as a result of information exchange with other associations that serve independent retailers. This survey is very timely in light of what we see as a challenging economic environment in 2008,” said Tom Drake, president and CEO of the North American Retailer Dealers Association.

“It’s heartening to see that so many consumers understand the important role independent retailers play in their communities—and that they are increasingly choosing to ‘shop local.’ Study after study has made clear that locally owned businesses have a far greater positive economic impact on their communities, contribute more to local charities, and are largely responsible for our towns and cities retaining their unique characteristics,” said Oren J. Teicher, chief operating officer of the American Booksellers Association.

“Independent retailers are especially susceptible to a sluggish economy, so it is gratifying to learn that consumers are conscious that where they shop matters a great deal to their community,”

said Kathleen McHugh, executive director of the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association.

“We’re seeing the beginnings of a shift in people’s shopping choices, particularly in places where ‘buy local’ campaigns have brought this to the forefront of public consciousness. ‘Locally owned’ is following in the footsteps of ‘organic’ as people look for ways to support a more sustainable economy and revitalize their communities,” said Stacy Mitchell, author of *Big-Box Swindle* and senior researcher for the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, which administered the survey.

The Independent Business Forum plans to repeat the survey next year. The group is also collaborating on initiatives to increase public awareness of the value of locally owned businesses and to address public policy issues that affect independent businesses.

“We continue to see the power independent businesses and communities gain through local Independent Business Alliances, so it makes sense for advocates of independent businesses to organize and build on that success nationally,” said Jennifer Rockne, executive director of the American Independent Business Alliance, which helped to convene the Independent Business Forum.

Independent Business Forum participants (partial list):

- *American Booksellers Association* (<http://www.bookweb.org>)
Contact: Oren Teicher, COO, 914-591-2665, ext. 6611, oren@bookweb.org
- *American Independent Business Alliance* (<http://www.amiba.net>)
Contact: Jennifer Rockne, Director, 406-582-1255, jennifer@amiba.net
- *American Nursery & Landscape Association* (<http://www.anla.org>)
Contact: Robert J. Dolibois, 202-789-2900, bdolibois@anla.org
- *American Specialty Toy Retailing Association* (<http://www.astratoy.org>)
Contact: Kathleen McHugh, Executive Director, 312-222-0984, kmchugh@astratoy.org
- *Gift and Home Trade Association* (<http://www.giftandhome.org>)
Contact: Brett Goldberg, 720-748-4872, info@ghat.net
- *Independent Florist Association* (<http://www.myifa.org>)
Contact: Tom Carlson, 608-755-7700, fairviewflorist@tds.net
- *Institute for Local Self-Reliance* (<http://www.ilsr.org>)
Contact: Stacy Mitchell, 207-774-6792, smitchell@ilsr.org
- *Logan Hardware (Ace Hardware member)* Contact: Gina Schaefer, 202-246-3450, gina@loganhardware.com
- *North American Retailer Dealers Association* (<http://www.narda.com>)
Contact: Tom Drake, 847-375-4806, TDrake@Connect2amc.com **RO**



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LYNX PROFESSIONAL GRILLS HOSTS TOP RETAILERS AT SALES MEETING IN PALM DESERT

(PALM DESERT, CA) Lynx Professional Grills (Commerce, CA,) the USA manufacturer of \$3,000 to \$10,000 welded one-piece BBQ grills and built-in grills and accessories, conducted a sales training meeting for leading retailers recently at the luxury J.W. Marriott Desert Springs Resort Hotel in Palm Desert, CA. Lynx introduced new models with exclusive features and new product categories including a new outdoor 53,000 BTU patented patio heater and a new 46,000 BTU wok/lobster cooker power burner. **RO**



Fred Albano, Albano Appliance; Bret Hadley, new CEO, Lynx; Marty Friedman, President, Eastern Marketing Corp; Bob Walsh, GMM, Karls Appliances at Lynx Meeting in Palm Desert



EMC Group at the Palms Course, Desert Springs Resort (left to right): **Top row:** Marc Howard, Plessers Appliance; Charles Gerhard and Gerry Gerhard, Gerhards Appliance; Bret Hadley, new CEO, Lynx; Bob Walsh, GMM, Karls Appliances; Marshall Myrman, Marketing Mgr, Lynx; George Stohrer Jr., Director of Sales, Eastern Marketing Corp.; Paul Moreau, GMM, State Street Appliance; Alan Davis, Yankee Fireplace; Fred Albano, Pound Ridge. **Front row:** Marty Friedman, President, Eastern Marketing Corp.; Jim Peiron, Prizer's Appliance; Ken Kohn, Gabowitz Appliance; Tony Aitoro, Aitoro Appliance. **Not pictured:** Helena Bennet, Merchant, Expo Design Centers; Ron Serafin, Lieberts Royal Green.



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MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR NARDA UNIVERSITY'S RETAIL & SERVICE FINANCE LAB—MARCH 29-30, 2008

NARDA University offers intensive study in a small-class setting on key areas of business management. The Finance Lab is a combination of interactive classroom time and lab time designed for retail and service business owners. Classroom time includes instruction and interactive attendee participation. Discussion will cover financial issues and questions, goal setting, understanding of ratios, creating an action plan to improve weak financial areas, cash flow review of 2007, and managing cash flow. Lab time will result in the owner creating their own projections and action plans with instructor guidance. Lab time also includes: analysis of key 2007 numbers in the areas of net profit, expenses, and income and then creating 2008 projections for sales, expense, net profit and cash flow.

The Finance Lab will be held immediately before the 2008 SRC in Las Vegas on March 28 and 29, 2008 at the Flamingo Hotel, Las Vegas, NV. To view the course outline and to register for the class visit www.narda.com or for more information, contact Natalie at 847.375.4831 or nnapolitano@narda.com

NARDA/SERVICE USA AND BRAND SOURCE SERVICE TO RUN REGIONAL SEMINARS

Service USA, a division of NARDA and Brand Source Service, a division of Brand Source, will offer a national rotation of business management and technical training seminars.

Business management training will be provided by select members of USA's expert faculty of speakers. Technical training will be provided by various manufacturers. For more information please contact J.R. Zirkelbach at Brand Source Services, 714-502-9620 or jr.zirkelbach@brandsource.com

South Atlantic	Columbia, SC	February 5-6
Pacific Southwest	Los Angeles, CA	February 5-6
Florida	Orlando, FL	February 12-13
Southwest	Austin, TX	February 19-20
Northwest	Portland, OR	February 26-27
Southeast	Knoxville, TN	March 4-5
Great Plains	Denver, CO	March 11-12
Michigan	Lansing, MI	March 11-12
Greater Midwest	Davenport, IA	April 15-16
Great Plains	Salina, KS	April 15-16
Tri States	Mars, PA	April 22-23
North Atlantic	Albany, NY	April 29-30
Mid America	Indianapolis, IN	May 6-7
Rocky Mountain	Salt Lake City, UT	May 13-14
Pacific Rim	Pleasanton, CA	May 20-21
North Central	Bloomington, MN	June 3-4

NARDA CALLS ON GOVERNORS TO LEVEL SALES TAX PLAYING FIELD

Seven independent retailer trade groups, including NARDA, followed up with officials from the 13 states that responded to, or acknowledged, the groups' letter in December, 2007 calling for the equitable enforcement of sales tax laws. Thus far, states responding to the groups' initial letter are California, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, Washington, West Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming. The trade groups also sent a second letter to the governors in the remaining 31 states with sales tax that had not yet responded to the groups' initial letter.

NARDA continues to urge members in the remaining 31 states to write their governors to call for the equitable enforcement of existing sales tax laws. To help in this important outreach, NARDA has prepared a template letter that members can adapt and send and we are asking NARDA members to write letters to their governors so that state officials understand the urgency of this issue for business owners in their state.

To have the greatest impact, please mail a hardcopy of the letter on store letterhead to your governor's office. Visit www.narda.com to access a letter that can be customized and then forward to the governor in your state.

NARDASAVINGS.COM ANNOUNCES NEW PROGRAM ON INBOUND AND OUTBOUND (LTL) SHIPMENTS

NARDA SAVINGS, in partnership with MESCA Freight Services, has negotiated deeply discounted freight (LTL) rates (75% discount) on shipments ranging from 100-10,000 pounds. NARDA SAVINGS members can take advantage of a 75% discount off current rates from the following national carriers:

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- Ample storage space located beneath the oven

The Heritage Series is now available through an exclusive North American distributor network. Manufacturer's initial suggested retail pricing is \$4,499 for the range, \$1,999 for the hood and \$500 for the backsplash. **RO**

WOMAN OF THE MONTH | *continued from page 18*

When Mary Ann Falkenberg began in the kitchen design business 25 years ago, she said "I was very fortunate to get into the business just as it was evolving from oak boxes lined up on walls to total interior architecture." Current design trends Falkenberg is seeing now is going back to paint with cabinetry white and bright and others deep and rich. Darker stains and exotic woods have also become important, she noted. "Clean lines-simplicity, contemporary design and organizational accessories are current trends," Falkenberg noted. "Our clients request a commercial look and function in their appliance choices. Stainless steel and cabinet fronts on refrigeration and dishwashing appliances are standard for our business at North Star kitchens." Though North Star Kitchens is not a family run company, the ambience of the showroom and its employees is like a family to Falkenberg. "We all work well together and John (Sacarelos) is a great mentor and a great manager. The company keeps the showroom current and brings in the finest high end materials and appliances for the public," Falkenberg explained. Mary Ann Falkenberg's impact on her clients and staff is evident. "I can't believe Mary Ann has now been a part of the North Star Kitchens team for over five years. She came on board with wonderful credentials and is a seasoned professional in every regard," said Sacarelos. "I receive many sincere comments from her clients regarding her ability to listen and deliver inspired design solutions to their existing home," Sacarelos added. "I have also visited many job sites to experience first hand the transformation from her design concepts to beautiful and functional spaces. Her enthusiasm in making our clients smile and her desire to exceed their expectations is evident by the stories they share with me." Besides her busy work schedule, the youthful Falkenberg is active in the local NKBA chapter and served a two year term on the national committee for Marketing and Communication. After 25 years in the industry, Mary Ann is still enthusiastic about her work and her clients. At the same time, she enjoys family, friends and travel when she is not in the design studio. **RO**



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CALENDAR 2008

FEBRUARY 2008

- 13-16 **International Builders Show**- Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL
 19 **NKBA Phoenix**- Kaiser Tile, Phoenix, AZ

MARCH 2008

- 2-5 **Nationwide Primetime Spring**-Hilton Anatole, Dallas, TX
 5-8 **Bath & Kitchen Buying Group Spring**- Arizona Grand Resort, Phoenix, AZ
 12-15 **NARI Spring BOD Meeting**-Hilton St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, FL
 15 **NARI Evening of Excellence**- Hilton St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, FL
 15-19 **Brandsource "The Summit"**- Hilton Anatole, Dallas, TX
 18 **NKBA Phoenix**- Stonenet, Phoenix, AZ

MARCH/APRIL 2008

- 30-2 **NARDA Service and Retail Convention (SRC)**-Flamingo Hotel, Las Vegas, NV

APRIL 2008

- 11-13 **KBIS**-Chicago, IL

AUGUST 2008

- 17-20 **Nationwide Primetime Fall**-Mandalay Bay Resort, Las Vegas, NV
 24-28 **Brandsource National Convention**- Paris Casino and Resort, Las Vegas, NV

SEPTEMBER 2008

- 7-11 **NARI Fall BOD Meeting**-TBD, Baltimore, MD
 9-12 **The Remodeling Show**-Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, MD

OCTOBER 2008

- 22-25 **Bath & Kitchen Buying Group Fall** - Westin Boston Waterfront, Boston, MA

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NOTE: Attention Buying Groups, NKBA and NARI Chapters, Distributors and Manufacturers: Please submit your meeting schedules to info@retailobserver.com ASAP so they may be included in our Coming Events Column. If you would like to receive the Retail Observer please go to www.retailobserver.com to subscribe.



PRESS RELEASE



PARA CONFERENCE, MARCH 2008: DEMONSTRATING THE PROMISE OF TECHNOLOGY

The 2008 PARA conference returns March 12-14, 2008. We'll be back at The Peabody in Orlando and co-located with EHX Spring. Register now to take advantage of our early bird special, only \$499. Save \$100 through January 31, 2008.

The 2008 conference theme is "Demonstrating the Promise of Technology," A PARA core value. We're planning sessions that deal with everything that goes into that: your showroom, the customer experience, your people, and the art of the demonstration itself! Additionally, we'll be tackling the tough topic that should be on the mind of everyone who has made an investment in custom installation: Are you making money on labor? As always, the conference will be a prime opportunity to network.

This is a high-value conference program that provides take-aways you can put into action. There's no better way to tap into all this than participating in this year's conference. Don't miss out. Register now **RO**

PRESS RELEASE



NATIONAL KITCHEN & BATH ASSOCIATION OFFERS COST-SAVING EDUCATION TO ITS 41,000 MEMBERS

The National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) today announced it will be offering its members educational seminars on controlling the cost of credit/debit/prepaid card acceptance. Industry experts from Heartland Payment Systems, one of the nation's largest payments processors, will educate attendees about card processing—including data security and PCI compliance. The seminars will be available at no cost to all of the NKBA's 71 local chapters throughout the United States and Canada. Heartland is the NKBA's preferred credit/debit/prepaid card and payroll processor. As such, the NKBA recommends Heartland to its 41,000 members, which include kitchen and bath designers, dealers, manufacturers, installers, distributors and others. Heartland is a NKBA business member. **RO**

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The world is changing. It changes every day, but not any more than it did yesterday, last week, or last year. It is easy to get lost in the doomsday predictions that come at us from every media source and water cooler conversation. The outcome is always the same. We adjust our behaviors to accommodate the latest threat to our livelihood.

In last month's article, I gave you the basic outline of the Four Pillars of Financial Stability. If you didn't read it, we know who you are and are monitoring you right now via satellite. To catch you up, the Four Pillars are Behavior, Accountability, Organization, and Education. You may have already guessed that this month I will focus on Behavior.

Whether you are a CEO of a corporation, a small business owner, or the person on the assembly line, your behavior plays a major role in your financial success. We've all seen them; the Hummer or other high-end vehicle with a company name and logo discreetly plastered on the rear window. "It's a business expense and tax deduction." Great, but it is still an expense that is depleting your cash flow. There are significantly better ways to reduce taxes.

I have also heard the justification that in order to make money, a business owner must project success. That is true, but the majority takes it too far. Showing you can blow money on anything you want is not a sign of success. It is a sign of fiscal irresponsibility. A French philosopher once said, "If we thought of ourselves as others do, we would disappear on the spot." He was so important that I couldn't even find his name. How often have you actually considered who the person was driving the fancy "work" vehicle, rather than focusing on the vehicle itself?

In working with clients, I see this every day. The ego is a very hard beast to tame. It feels good to talk big about money. It helps us to feel important and boosts our confidence. The danger is that anything built on an illusion can come crashing down at any time, causing us to spend more money to get that feeling back. Do you see an addictive pattern starting here?

The solution is easy. What is most important to you and to the success of your business? Are you willing to delay instant gratification to accomplish those goals? It is very important that you do not define your goals from a template or what someone else tells you is important. Look at yourself, and determine if the way you spend your money adequately reflects who you are and what you wish to accomplish.

Gregory Hedges

Financial Counselor

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With 16 years of management experience, Greg has developed a sharp eye for identifying inefficiencies, cross-purposes and miscommunication—and for how quickly they can affect wealth. Utilizing the tools of the Four Pillars of Financial Stability and project management, he empathetically helps individuals and businesses set priorities and create the balance they need for their financial health.

*Greg is an active member of the National Association of Credit Counselors and the Project Management Institute®. He has spoken to many organizations including the New Mexico Mortgage Lenders Association, New Mexico Association of Mortgage Brokers, community workshops, and seminars. He is co-author of the forthcoming book *The Four Pillars of Financial Stability: How to Succeed in Finances by Changing the Way You Think!* and is highly skilled in organization methodologies, developing a wide range of custom databases, websites and internal controls to increase effectiveness and profitability. His passion is to help others and he uses his talents and experience to help them change the way they perceive money. *





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This is the time of year when the mailman fills my mailbox with catalogs. I must be on every sucker's list in the world! I get the most ornate and beautiful catalogs from people I have never heard of or done business with before. I even get catalogs that are about products that I know nothing about. For example, a catalog filled with descriptions for shipping supplies and a catalog with pretty pictures of sailboats and I am not a sailor. A catalog arrived in the mail today filled with items that all travelers should have. The well-dressed traveler will be wearing a safari hat (cost \$35), shirt and pants of expensive twill (cost \$250) and shoes (cost \$175). This doesn't include a travel watch, special underwear, and some mighty fancy luggage. I especially like the catalogs filled with pictures of fresh fruit and nuts and all those good things that come to mind when you think of the Holiday season. Don't forget the catalogs that have all kinds of jingle bells, wreaths, Christmas ornaments, and miniature sleighs. I understand that there is a phone number you can call to get on a register of "do not send me unsolicited mail." My mailman gave me the number—I think he gets tired of hauling those catalogs around!

WINE TIME!

As I write this I am on a cruise ship in Mexican waters and I have just come from a wine tasting event. Dozens of fellow passengers enjoyed the lecture by the head Wine Steward who talked about the famous wines on board their ship. Each guest had a scorecard and four glasses to taste 2 whites and 2 reds. The idea was to rate the wine by various categories such as how the wine smells, its body (whatever that means), aftertaste, and some other characteristics. The first wine he introduced was a California Chardonnay which sells for \$6.99 or \$7.99 in most California markets (depending on where you buy it) and it's on their wine list for \$30.00! It's interesting to watch the participants as they taste the wine. Some taste with great respect, others quaff the wine down like water, and others twirl it around the glass, smell it, gingerly taste the wine, discuss the merits of the wine with their neighbors and then reluctantly drink. I have been to several wine tasting parties and I'm not sure if I really learned anything about wines. To learn about wines, it seems to me, you must buy various wines from various wineries and countries and taste them yourself. If you find a wine you like—enjoy! And forget that old adage about white wines with white foods and red wines with red foods. A good Merlot goes with fish as well as red meat. A hearty Chardonnay goes with anything. So drink what you want and enjoy. **RO**

Chuck Edmonds

In Passing

In Passing

CRAIG MOON

It is with deep sorrow that we announce that BSH Builder Sales team member, Craig Moon, has recently passed away. Craig leaves behind his wife Lynne and daughter Krista, along with other loving family members. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family. Craig was a vital member of the BSH builder sales team bringing with him over 30-years of professional experience in the industry. His work with us for the past 2-years has greatly impacted our successful growth. In his honor, BSH Home Appliances has made a contribution to the American Cancer Society. Craig will be missed by everyone with whom he has worked.

In Loving Memory

EUGENE (GENE) LINEHAN

November 24, 1938—December 10, 2007

Love is always patient and kind—
Love does not come to an end—
There are three things that last—
faith, hope and love, and the
greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:4-13

Gene worked for Golden West Sales for 20-plus years. Gene was known as one of those guys that always went the extra mile. He is survived by his wife, Gloria and daughter, Michelle.

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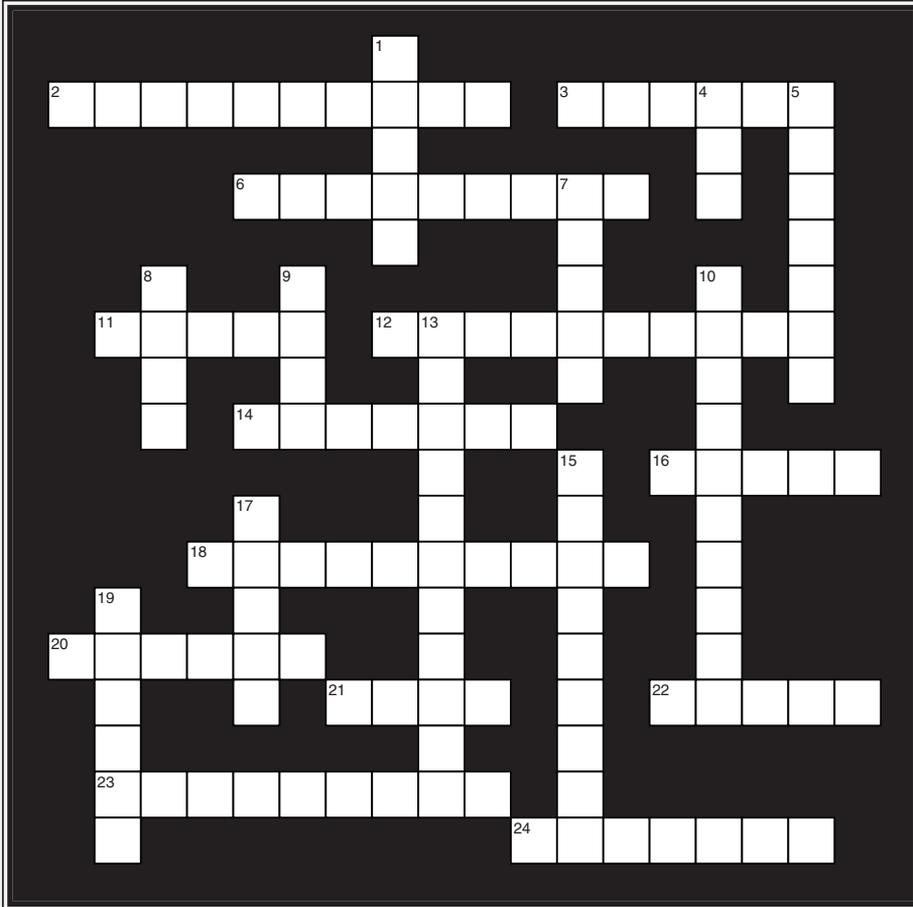
...for the HOME



Re-Observe the Word

—FEBRUARY CROSSWORD—

(PUZZLE ANSWERS ARE FOUND IN THE EDITORIAL AND AD PAGES OF EACH ISSUE OF THE RETAIL OBSERVER.)



ACROSS

- 2 WOMAN OF THE MONTH
- 3 LYNX PROFESSIONAL
- 6 _____ PAYMENT SYSTEMS
- 11 NARDA'S FREIGHT COMPANY
- 12 100 YEARS OLD
- 14 HOSTED NKBA MINNESOTA
- 16 USES A BIO-FILTER
- 18 MIELE'S NEW LINE
- 20 MAYTAG'S NEW STEAM LAUNDRY
- 21 KBIS SETTING THE _____
- 22 JOE DILLION LIVES IN
- 23 NARI JUDGES
- 24 NEW MANAGER AT KOBE

DOWN

- 1 PANASONICS NEWEST
- 4 LIEBHERR LIGHTING
- 5 NKBA ANNOUNCED _____ DESIGN COMPETITION WINNERS
- 7 FOUNDING MEMBER INDEPENDANT BUSINEE FORUM
- 8 ALMO NEW VP
- 9 CONVENTION AT PEABODY
- 10 125 YEARS OLD
- 13 JENNAIR THE POWER OF _____
- 15 MAKE HEARTHIS
- 17 LAUNCHED NEW WEBSITE
- 19 CHUCK WROTE ON A _____

(LOOK FOR THIS MONTH'S PUZZLE SOLUTION IN THE UPCOMING MARCH ISSUE)

PRIZE PUZZLE

TEST YOUR POWER OF OBSERVATION

The online functionality of the crossword has been delayed, so starting soon in 2008, you will be able to go on-line to complete the crossword for submission. The first 50 puzzles submitted through the online process will be entered into a drawing for the sponsored product that month. For this month, please enjoy the reading, and we'll see you soon for the prize puzzle on-line at www.retailobserver.com. A test puzzle is available at: <http://www.MyCrosswords.com/549/RetailObserver/ReobserveTheWord.html>

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