

The *Retail Observer*

August 2007

The Monthly News Magazine With Personality

Vol.19, Issue 5



The Mountain View store after a \$4,000,000 remodel

Meyer Appliance & Kitchens Revisited

MOUNTAIN VIEW - SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

BY LEE BOUCHER

Meyer Appliance was the featured front-page article in the August 1993 edition of the *Retail Observer*. It was successful then and today it is super-successful. With three stores its total gross volume in 1993 was \$7,000,000. At this writing combining kitchen sales, appliance sales, parts and service, its total gross sales volume has mushroomed to \$17,000,000 with just two stores.

A fast forward review shows that Ray Meyer Sr. established Meyer Electric in Mountain View, CA in 1946 as an electrical contractor. In 1947 he bought GE and Westinghouse appliances and became a major appliance dealer. In 1952 Vern Hostetler, then 17 years old, joined the firm as a

| continued on page 6 |

Evo Leads the Trend in Social Cooking

BY RITA A. LEONARD

A revolutionary new appliance is sweeping through the food preparation industry: Evo patented circular flattop cooking surfaces. From Yale University to Disney World, Costa Rica to Bahrain, distinctive Evo appliances are creating indoor and outdoor social cooking environments that inspire a convivial atmosphere through shared cooking experience. While hotels, resorts, clubs and cooking schools initially capitalized on Evo's presentation cooking style, groceries and luxury

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Evo's evolutionary focus on convivial food preparation is advertised "for the way you cook."

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Welcome

to our second edition of the *Retail Observer*. Yes, I know it's been 18 years since this publication was started, but the history goes deeper. This magazine actually started as the *Northern California Retailer* in 1970. Wow, 37 years. Very few publications can say that. We are over-run with magazines that show us who wore the wrong shoes with the right dress or told us the exact day our President was replaced by Aliens. I have been in this industry for 17 years now and have yet to find anything that compares to what this magazine is. I feel honored to be able to take this iconic piece of retail history to the next level.

Chuck Edmonds and Lee Boucher have worked side by side for 17½ years now. I have been fortunate to work with them for the past 4 months getting the transition set-up and I am amazed at what they have accomplished in today's hi-tech society. As you read later in Lee's editorial you will see how he describes himself as a low-tech man, as Chuck is as well. It's no surprise that this magazine was put together via typed page, printed photos, scissors and glue sticks. Most importantly it was held together by great relationships with the retail appliance, electronics and plumbing industries. I congratulate them both for keeping this magazine going while staying a full furlong behind the technologically advancing world. They built this magazine on handshakes, hard work (although Chuck does golf every Thursday) and integrity. These are the things that made the *Retail Observer* what it is today. Gentleman, our deepest gratitude for what you have given us. (APPLAUSE!!!)

THE FUTURE

Boy, where do we go from here? Well let's have a little insight into the future of the *Retail Observer*. Many of you have been touched by Chuck or Lee in some way. Fortunately for us, they aren't leaving. They have both decided to stay on and help us grow the magazine. My hope is to create some new offerings in the magazine while keeping up with its past history. We will be adding some new sections and reviving some old ones. On page 54 of this issue you will find a crossword puzzle. I know many magazines have a crossword puzzle. Here's the twist. This will be a sponsored piece from September on. Each month a manufacturer will sponsor this page with a product. The first 50 people to go online and submit a completed (correct) puzzle will be in a drawing for the item. The answers to the puzzle will be found throughout the magazine in articles and ads. Our website is www.retailobserver.com, that's where you will find a puzzle icon (in September). When you have a chance, please go to the web and see what we have already done. As we grow, the web will also be a significant part of the *Retail Observer*. We will be providing links to manufactures and distributor websites, overflow press releases and news, and for you ECO readers, you will be able to read the entire magazine online in a page-flipping-fully-downloadable-interactive-completely-green-online version.

I only have enough space left to say thank you to all those people that helped us make the decision to carry on the tradition that the *Retail Observer* brings and to let you all know that we feel that this is your magazine, your industry and your time—we want to make the most of it. Please email us any suggestions or ideas, we would enjoy seeing them. (info@retailobserver.com).

Enjoy,

Moe Lastfogel



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deliveryman while learning how to repair electric appliances. In 1960 Ray Meyer Jr., came to work as an appliance salesman. Both Hostetler and Ray Jr. were and are outstanding natural salesmen. In the early 1970's the firm hired a contractor to begin a kitchen remodeling business. It didn't work out, so Ray Meyer Jr. said "Let me give it a try".

That was a first for a major appliance dealer. No appliance dealer that I know of entered the kitchen remodeling business in the '70's. Ray Jr. had his office and small showroom on the second floor of this former J.C. Penney store. It was rough going. Nevertheless, he scheduled two kitchen remodels at the same time. They were mostly apartment kitchen remodels. Six years ago Meyer Appliance and Kitchens had the store entirely remodeled at a cost of \$4,000,000. On the top floor of this building are six business suites that have been leased since the project was completed. That income pays for the mortgage on the building. The best part for Ray Meyer Jr. and the kitchen and bath remodeling business is that there are now 24 kitchen vignettes on the main floor and 6 full time designers, all on commission, to take care of the overflowing demand of their services.

KITCHEN & BATH REMODELING

The kitchen vignettes can satisfy any prospective kitchen remodeler's needs. They can see Hallmark and Aristocratic high end-cabinets, Crystal medium-priced cabinets, and Columbia cabinets for the budget minded. The customers can choose from granite or Corian countertops and appliances like Viking, Sub-Zero, Wolf, and Miele for the affluent buyers. Today, Ray Meyer Jr. no longer works the floor as a designer or as a salesman. He manages the entire department and schedules sales training meetings with both cabinet and appliance representatives. "It has been a long haul since I was upstairs by myself in the 1970's trying to get the kitchen remodeling business financially successful until today when I am supervising six designers and their project." Ray Meyer Jr. has two sons working with him in the kitchen remodeling business, Raymond Arnold Meyer III and Rodney Arno Meyer. Perhaps Ray Jr. is looking to retire some day.

The brands carried in the Meyer stores in Mt. View and San Jose are: G.E., KitchenAid, Miele, Thermador, Vent-A-Hood, Jenn-Air, Bosch, Gaggenau, Fisher & Paykel, Sub-Zero, Wolf, Viking, Maytag, Amana, and ASKO. The Mountain View store has 19K sf of display space while the San Jose store has 6K SF of display space plus a 10K warehouse that services both stores.

THE SERVICE AND PARTS DEPARTMENT

Meyer Appliance & Kitchens is the only appliance dealer on the San Francisco Peninsula that has its own service department. "It is a tremendous sales tool when talking to a prospective customer", said Vern Hostetler. "The factory service from the major manufacturers is average at best. We have seven service trucks, four delivery and installation trucks and two full-time employees in our parts department. Our reputation is almost sixty years old. No major appliance dealer in our area can duplicate that!"

AVB - BRAND SOURCE

In 1979 Meyer Appliance joined AVB, a major appliance and electronic buying group. Vern Hostetler was the representative for the store. He was on the board of directors for 20 years and President of the Northern California chapter twice. Vern said the best thing that happened to the group was when the Northern

| *continued on page 10* |

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Evo Leads the Trend | *continued from page 1* |

homes are now requesting models to add allure to the trend in cooking as entertainment.

With one inspiration, Bob Shingler created a new stage for indoor and outdoor grills and ranges. His Beaverton world headquarters manufactures a line of circular social cooking stations for both residential and commercial use. The sleek stainless steel units invite conviviality and participation in the cooking experience, expanding the at-home 'cocooning' trend.

Shingler introduced his round gas and electric grills in 2001 in response to local requests. He started with outdoor grills, introducing indoor models in 2007. "We now employ a staff of 15," says Shingler. "The units are manufactured in Oregon and assembled in our plant." Evo recently hired Alan Bates as Director of Marketing Development. "At this point, we're looking for strategic partnerships," says Bates. "We're now aiming at an international marketplace."



Bob Shingler, President of Evo "social cooking stations", introduces an Affinity 25E presentation service cart, primarily for indoor commercial sales.



US headquarters for trend-setting Evo "social cooking stations" is at 8140 SW Nimbus Ave, Beaverton, OR.

The appliances come in tabletop, wheeled cart or built-in models in 25 or 30-inch diameters, each with a ceramic-coated steel cook surface. "We feel it's a stand-out product, with its mobile and presentation aspects," says Shingler. "It certainly allows food preparation to be a more fun social experience."

Separate inner and outer circular burners ensure thorough, even heating with no hot or cold spots. A sealed heater element and circular drip pan with dual spill collection trays allow for easy cleanup. Guests can gather freely around the cooking area while the chef demonstrates expertise and shares in the convivial atmosphere.

"Our Evo flattops are popular in commercial settings for live action cooking demonstrations," notes Shingler. "Special angled side tables allow a variety of setup configurations that promote natural, flowing design. The units are perfect for

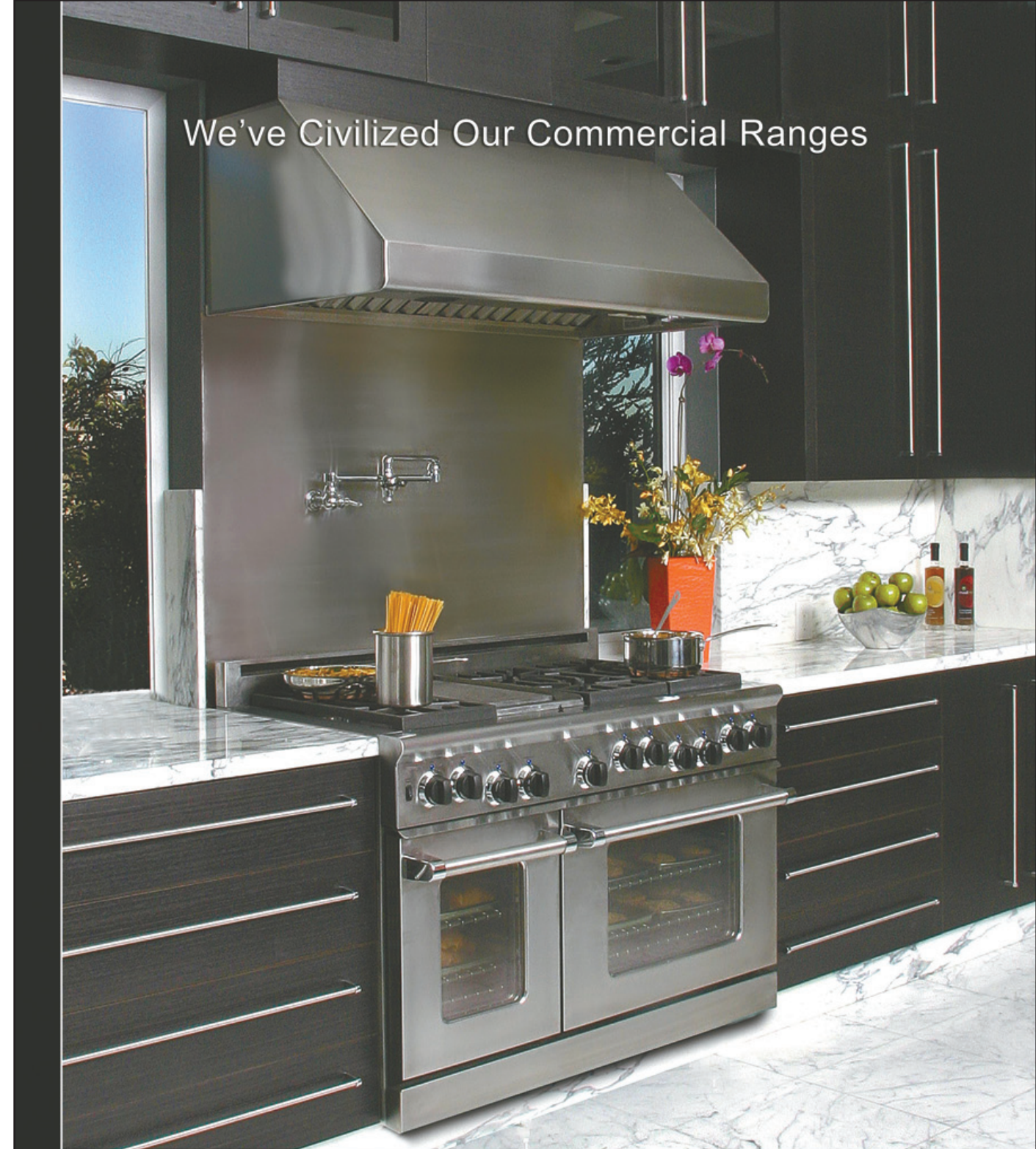
| *continued on page 44* |



The Evo Affinity 25E presentation cooking station enhances a trend toward conviviality and shared experience in fresh-prepared foods.



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California Chapter of Key National joined his AVB.chapter. “That gave us some clout and we were able to negotiate better programs with our vendors.”

Hostetler also said the best benefit he received from the buying group was education. “We learn from each other plus listening to motivational speakers. All of us members can listen to what our competitor’s brands are doing. There are no secrets. The 4 to 5 percent rebates are nice, also.”

This dealer recently joined NARI, The National Association of the Remodeling Industry San Jose Chapter. “This organization has members that participate in all aspects of remodeling — electricians, fabricators, lawyers, contractors, etc. We can learn from them and they can learn from us”, commented Hostetler.

ADVERTISING

This store has hired an ad agency named The Paul Myer Ad Agency. This ad agency schedules regular cable TV spots that targets close-by cities that have no major appliance dealers—not even big box stores, like Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Portola Valley and Woodside. There are also spots on NBC’s KRON 4 in the Bay area. Craig Hostetler, Vern’s son now is in charge of the firm’s advertising program. There is no pricing on these ads that feature anything but high-end appliances like Viking, Sub-Zero, Wolf, Miele, Thermador and GE Monogram.

Meyer appliance customer base is medium to high end. It no

longer carries \$299.95 washing machines or other leader model appliances.

A direct mail piece is sent to zip code areas twice a month that brings very satisfactory results.

1993 MEYER APPLIANCE

In reading the August 1993 issue of the *Retail Observer*, I found this quote, “By 1976 Ray Meyer Sr. and his wife Dorothy, decided it was time to sell out to the three property owners. Today, each owns an equal share of the corporation. Vern Hostetler is the president, Rick Meyer is Sec-Treasurer and Ray Meyer Jr. is the vice-president. The important thing is the division of responsibility. Ray Jr. is the comptroller, and Vern is the overall manager, the buyer and the merchandising manager. As Rick said, “When it comes to a sticky decision, all three of us discuss it over a period of time, but when it comes time to make that decision the person in charge of that department says “yes or no”. That still holds true today.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

All three have been active with the Mountain View Chamber of Commerce. Ray. Jr. has been on the Revitalization Committee for 20 years, Vern served on the Downtown Commission and Rick Meyer on the Parking Commission. All of them are movers and shakers. No wonder this dealership is so successful. **RO**



Miele Kitchen Vignette



Viking Kitchen Vignette



Wolf Kitchen Vignette



Helen Choi CKD,CBD, one of the 7 Meyer Kitchen designers



Vern Hostetler, President with Ray Meyer Jr., Vice-President. Rick Meyer Sec-Treasurer was unavailable for this photo.

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Brand Source Sponsors New Orleans Fund Raiser



Bob Lawrence, CEO of Brand Source and his wife, Judy; Damon Harmon, CEO of DNA Creative Media and his wife, Maria.



Actor Steve Guttenberg applauds Brand Source for its support of the Katrina Relief.



Jasmine Turner, Louis Gossett Jr. and Morgan Fairchild at the ReNew Orleans Community Center Project Fundraiser, sponsored by Brand Source.

WESTLAKE, CA —On Sunday July 15, Brand Source, the title sponsor of the ReNew Orleans Community Center Project, hosted a fund raiser at the Four Seasons, Westlake, California. The purpose of the project is to build a 23,000 square foot community center in the heart of New Orleans funded from the private sector to create expediency and efficiency rather than the community waiting for government funds.

Brand Source is partnered with DNA Creative and Fisher & Paykel/DCS on this project. The building of the community center will translate into three 1-hour television shows to be aired during the fourth quarter.

The event was attended by many notable celebrities including film stars, TV stars, and sports celebrities. Speaking at the event was Academy Award winner and Executive Producer of ReNew Orleans, Lou Gossett Jr., Steve Guttenberg, film and TV star of such notable films as Three Men and a Little Lady and Cocoon, Bob Lawrence, Brand Source CEO and John White, Executive Vice President of Appliances.

Mr. Gossett complimented Brand Source on being on the cutting edge of developing projects to benefit people and communities in devastated areas. Mr. Guttenberg, who has done a significant amount of charitable work in New Orleans helping homeless and youth find opportunities, also complimented Brand Source and Fisher & Paykel for their work in creating something that benefits the community as well as helps create brand awareness for both Brand Source and Fisher & Paykel.

Bob Lawrence commented that the ReNew Orleans Community Center Project is truly a win-win. "It's something that the community can be proud of. Where people can go, spend their time, participate in educational opportunities, take advantage of everything the community offers, as well as contributes to the brand awareness of Brand Source through the television series."

John White, in detailing the project, pointed out that there would be working kitchens with product supplied by Fisher & Paykel/DCS so the community center can offer cooking classes, as well as a home theater media room that will be dedicated to Eric Medlen, the John Force driver killed in a driving accident in March, a computer room, as well as a full size gymnasium all designed for youth and community involvement.

The project is designed around the second anniversary of Katrina, which devastated major parts of New Orleans. The building will be full service, and include a police substation. The grounds will include baseball and soccer fields. Completion is slated for late 2007. Mr. Lawrence added, "We are very proud to be the title sponsor of this project. It combines our involvement in our local communities as well as meets our need for increasing top mind awareness of Brand Source through the TV show". **RO**



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MINNESOTA APRIL NKBA MEETING

LIVING GREEN CUTS WATER CONSUMPTION

BY DICK ROHLAND

Nearly 100 members of the Minnesota NKBA including students took time off from their mid-day schedules to hear Jackie Maher, CID of Kohler offer some "Living Green" principles as they apply to water conservation to consider in any kitchen or bath design.

Genz-Ryan, Burnsville, MN and nearly a 60 year family run plumbing company hosted the noon luncheon event.

"It is the wave of the future for both residential and commercial designers," Maher remarked regarding "Living Green" principles. "Even though we live in a state where water consumption may not be at the forefront of our thoughts, it takes a tremendous amount of energy to create water for everyday living and all of us need to be more conscious of the impact this has on our environment."

Kohler, according to Maher, has more green plumbing products to offer than any other manufacturer including dual force toilets, low flow faucets aerators, waterless urinals and cast iron are just some of the Kohler plumbing products.

Arlynne Wolf, an instructor at Century College in Minneapolis noted that "the seminar was beneficial for all professionals and students that were able to attend this informative meeting." **RO**



Lori Anderson of Cabinet Concepts and Interiors, Eden Prairie, MN with Lisa LaNasa, owner of Lisa LaNasa Design, Minneapolis, MN.



Bill Mark and Sarah Wood, both with Twin Cities Home Improvement, Minneapolis, MN picked up some "Living Green" tips from Jackie Maher of Kohler.



Carol Peden, AKBD, Kitchens of Stillwater, Stillwater, MN and Chanda Woods, get company name.



Kristina Boyer, Cali Peterson and Tina Meyer are design students from The Art Institute of Minneapolis.



Flynn McKeagen and John Hardacker, both with Pleckenpol Builders, Bloomington, MN.



Judy Kimble, Kohler, Jon Ryan, owner of Genz-Ryan, Garry Jordan, Kohler and Jackie Maher, Kohler.

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Lenny Paul Joins Almo Corporation as Eastern Division Sales Manager

PHILADELPHIA, PA - June 25, 2007: Almo Corporation has named Lenny Paul Eastern Division Sales Manager for the company. In this position, Lenny will direct the East Coast sales team for consumer electronics and appliances, reporting to Bill Clark, Vice President of Sales.

“Lenny brings to Almo a wealth of experience in the appliance and consumer electronics markets,” said Bill Clark, Almo Vice President of Sales. “We’ve worked with Lenny for many years and are confident he’ll hit the ground running as part of the Almo team. Everyone at Almo is happy to have him on board.”

An industry veteran, Lenny brings more than 40 years of industry experience to his role at Almo. Most recently, he managed the Polaroid and Sunbeam brands for Petters Consumer Brands. Prior to joining Petters, Lenny held positions with General Motors Major Appliances, Haier America and Electrolux. **RO**

Brand Source NW Honors Wayne Dike

BY RITA A. LEONARD

Brand Source NW members enjoyed a special getaway for their annual summer meeting. The June BBQ Appreciation Dinner was held at The Resort at the Mountain near Mt. Hood. Activities included a golf tournament, BBQ dinner reception, and western-style dancing.

Retiring NW Regional Manager Wayne Dike received hugs, good wishes and a standing ovation along with a special plaque. Chapter President Larry Snider presented the award, which read, “In Appreciation for your years of service and enthusiasm to the members of Brand Source NW Region, we thank you”. Testimonials and humorous anecdotes followed as guests recalled special moments with Wayne over the years.

Friends wearing the ‘Wayne Dike beret’ gathered around the guest of honor, who was recognized as one of the best salesmen in the industry.

| continued on page 22 |



Wayne Dike, Retiring NW Regional Manager for Brand Source NW, with honorary award citing his years of service & enthusiasm to the members of Brand Source NW.



Wayne Dike, retiring Regional Manager for Brand Source NW, surrounded by “Wayne’s Angels” in trademark black berets.

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Shopping for a new refrigerator can be daunting, especially if you want one that looks beautiful, works well—and is good for the environment. Here are three easy ways to make an informed choice for your healthy kitchen to keep your veggies—and the planet—green:



1 MAKE SURE YOUR REFRIGERATOR IS AS HEALTHY AS YOUR FOOD
You don't want mercury in your food so make sure it's not in your refrigerator. Beginning this June, Liebherr will be the first refrigeration manufacturer worldwide to comply with RoHS (Restriction of hazardous substances) by eliminating lead, mercury, cadmium, and other harmful chemicals from the production process.

2 REACH FOR THE ENERGY STAR
ENERGY STAR is a rating given by the Department of Energy for energy efficiency. Liebherr is a leader in the manufacturing of ENERGY STAR appliances so if you are shopping for refrigerators or freezers, look for Liebherr.

3 GO GREEN ALL THE WAY
Packaging, production and waste removal systems also contribute to global warming. Liebherr is environmentally responsible at all levels of production including reduced use of chemicals, solvents, and energy consumption, using 100% recycled packaging materials and purifying the water used in the production process.



For more ways Liebherr is committed to protecting the environment visit www.liebherr-appliances.com



Excel Distributing Expansion Plans South West Division Headed up by Jeff Tkach

Excel Distributing Petaluma, California (since 1984) is expanding into the South West, Utah, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona and Southern Nevada. Excel is very excited about the addition of Jeff Tkach to the Excel family, Excel has always been a very dedicated and passionate distributor in California and Northern Nevada and Jeff fits that mold. Jeff knows the dealer base in the South West and has been working with them in this territory for over two years. Jeff will continue building dealer relationships and confidants in his new position as South West Division Manager for Excel Distributing. Jeff and Excel will be offering Wind Crest, FCI, Koppersbusch, ariston, Fantech and Coldtech. Jeff is looking forward to getting out to his dealer base and sharing with them his new programs and products. **RO**



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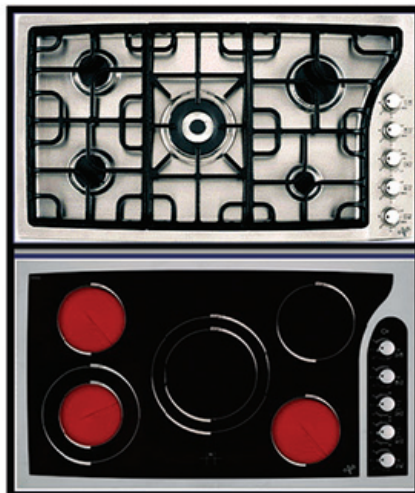
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DACOR HOSTS NKBA CHAPTER MEETING

BY LEE BOUCHER

The Northern California Chapter of NKBA held its meeting in DACOR's beautiful showcase room in San Francisco on Thursday, June 21, 2007. After enjoying a wide variety of beverages, innovative hors d'oeuvres and a special dinner prepared in DACOR's demonstration kitchen by caterer Jan Berner, the members and guests were greeted by Patricia Brown, President of the Northern California Chapter. She welcomed the overflowing crowd and thanked them for fighting the commute traffic to attend the meeting. She then recognized Charlene Rouspil, Marvin Berry, Stacie Berry and Jim Jensen (DACOR representatives) for being such gracious hosts.

The speaker of the evening was Rebecca Ewing from Decatur, Georgia. She is a nationwide-known speaker on the subject of "Color and Design". She emphasized that color in the kitchen and the rest of the house interior is vital to the happiness of its residents. Having off-white walls in every room tends to be dull after a period of time. Ewing also noted that some major appliance manufacturers are now producing appliances in color like European manufacturers have done for years.

The next NKBA Northern California Chapter meeting will be held at University Electric in Santa Clara, CA on August 22, 2007. **RO**



A gathering of Past Presidents- Past Pres. ASID Kate Jarvis ASID,CKD, Past Pres. NKBA Lilly Yee CKD,CBD,CID,ASID and Past Pres. NKBA MaryJo Camp CKD,CBD,CID.



Speaker Rebecca Ewing CMG "How Color Impacts Life" and Chapter President Patricia Brown.



Two generations of DACOR reps Marvin and Stacie Berry.



Jim Heintz University Electric, Jim Jensen DACOR and Gary Connors Standards of Excellence.



Charlene Rouspil Showroom Manager DACOR showing of their various awards.



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Brand Source Honors Wayne Dike | *continued from page 16* |

Comments included, "Customers always remember you," and "We owe you a great debt as a leader and example." District and Area Managers commended Wayne on the exceptional mark he made in the industry. He will now spend time with his family in Sacramento while keeping in contact with friends via the website www.whereswayne.com. | *continued on page 24* |



L to R: Darrell Howsley, Sales Rep with SpringAir Mattress; Mike Allen, GM Home Furnishings, with Brand Source in Anaheim, CA; and Chris Kudriavtseff, President of CK Sales.



L to R: Jerry Roorda of DeWaard & Bode Appliance, Bellingham WA; Kathy Graf, with Brand Source Finance; Pam Green, representing Brand Source Finance.



L to R: Greg Meeker, owner of Puyallup Appliance; Lynn and Jim Riegelmann, from Riegelmann's Appliance in Gresham, OR.



Father and son from Independence Appliance await BBQ dinner, owner Lloyd Coffman; L-Manager Robert Coffman.



L to R: Dick & Dee Scott, owners of Desco Audio/Video in Olympia, WA; Tom Milne, District Manager for Electrolux; Bob Ludwig, Consultant for Electrolux; and Kate Ludwig, also representing Electrolux.



L to R: Tom Milne, District Manager for Electrolux; Wayne Dike, NW Regional Manager for Brand Source NW; Jerry Roorda from DeWaard & Bode Appliance, Bellingham WA; and Ronna Vigers, Account Manager with Whirlpool.



L to R: Art Learmonth, Sales & Incentives for Whirlpool Corp.; Ralph Hake, Sales Manager with Whirlpool; and Rick Schultz, Territory Manager with Whirlpool.



L to R: Jim Morse, Area Sales Manager with Echelon; Larry Snider, owner of Hamilton's Appliance in Gladstone, OR, and NW Chapter President; Greg Meeker, owner of Puyallup Appliance; and Dave Chamberlin, co-owner of Hamilton's Appliance.



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Brand Source Honors Wayne Dike | *continued from page 22* |

Golf tournament winners included Mike Rimmer and Heather Lewis for “Closest to the Hole”, and Terry Layton and Heather Lewis for “Longest Drive”. Members and families enjoyed time together in the refreshing mountain atmosphere, filling up on BBQ picnic fare and learning western dance routines. **RO**



L to R: Dick and Barb Muntis, owners of Murphy's Brand Source at Whidbey Is, WA; and Dave Chamberlin, co-owner of Hamilton's Appliance, Gladstone, OR.



L to R: Heather and Dennis Lewis, owners of Lewis Audio/Video in Newberg, OR; Joyce and Mike Anderson, owners of Schmidt's Appliance at Bainbridge Is, WA.



L to R: Wayne Dike, NW Regional Manager for Brand Source NW; Carl Humphries, President of West Coast Appliance; and Kathy Graf, from Brand Source Finance



L to R: Brian Gruber, GE Area Sales Manager from Seattle; Terry Sullivan, GE Area Sales Manager from Seattle; and Kerry Garner, GE Area Sales Manager from Portland.



L to R: Dan Paulson, Sales Rep with Echelon; John Harrington, President at LG; and Tom Vincent, owner of Walt's Sherwood Appliance in Sherwood, OR.



L to R: Larry Hirschberger, District Manager with Electrolux; Don Frei, owner of Howard Hughes Appliance in Moscow, ID; and Mike Kuempel, District Manager with Electrolux.

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GE Launches New Line of Appliances

GE CAFÉ SERIES WITH RESTAURANT-INSPIRED APPEARANCE AND FEATURES FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE TO COOK AND ENTERTAIN

You've seen those kitchens on the home cable channels—so shiny and pristine that it certainly raises the question whether anyone actually cooks in these temples to culinary nirvana. Now, the new GE Café series offers a suite of appliances for the rest of us—those who not only love the look of stainless steel wrapped technology but who actually love to cook and entertain family and friends. The fact that each appliance is free-standing in configuration also makes this an easy upgrade for nearly everyone. Many people are upgrading their kitchens to reflect their interest in cooking and desire to entertain while capturing the ambience of a restaurant quality kitchen. Café was designed for these people. This affordable suite also comes with all the performance features home chefs would expect:



GE Café Gas Range

Available as a free-standing slide-in configuration with an optional back guard, consumers can select an all gas range or a dual-fuel range with one 18,000 BTU dual-stacked burner, one 17,000 BTU burner and a center oval burner with non-stick griddle

GE Café Dishwasher

Stainless steel interior, Smart Dispense™ technology that holds an entire 45-ounce bottle of liquid or gel dishwasher detergent and dispenses just the right amount based on water hardness, cycle selection, and soil level of the dishes

GE Café Refrigerator

Stainless-steel side panels for a sleek appearance regardless of placement in kitchen

GE Café Over-the-Range Microwave

Dual-distribution cooking system combines 1100 watts of cooking power, a rotating turntable, and a top and second side stirrer for exceptionally even heating and defrosting of food 2.0 cubic feet of capacity, four-speed, 315 CFM vent and Blue LCD touch controls.

GE Café Vent Hood

Powerful 600 CFM performance removes smoke and vapors from the cooking area. Dual-halogen cooktop light for illumination of cooking surface

GE will continue to expand product offerings going forward. For more information, visit www.geappliances.com **RO**



GE Monogram

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Fagor Dishwasher Receives Recognition From *Women's Day Magazine*

LYNDHURST, NJ- This year, the Fagor LFA-073 Dishwasher claimed Honorable Mention status for technical innovation and design excellence in the appliance category at the annual Kitchen & Bath Awards, sponsored by *Woman's Day Special Interest Publications' Kitchens & Baths* magazine

What makes this dishwasher so special is that it not only is competitively priced and operates at a super silent 45Db, but that it is also one of the most eco-friendly appliances on the market today.

Eco-friendly signifies that Fagor strives to use natural resources efficiently to preserve the environment and save energy, developing highly efficient products that consume less and save money; contributing to a healthy planet for us and for future generations.

Therefore, all Fagor dishwashers are equipped with an Advanced Intelligence System. With an alternating sprayer system and eco-sensor to determine the water quality and adjust consumption accordingly, this dishwasher is designed to use the minimum amount of time, water and energy needed to produce sparkling dishes every time.



The award was announced to Fagor at the Kitchen/Bath Industry Show (K/BIS) at the Las Vegas Convention Center last May. The Kitchen & Bath Awards program has been held for the past four years. A panel that includes professional designers and editors who specialize in kitchens and baths judge entries.

"Recognition by a magazine of this caliber is an accomplishment we are proud of," said Sara Delahera, Fagor's VP of Sales & Marketing. "Our goal is to continuously launch eco-friendly, high-quality and competitively priced products. Product innovation has always been the driver to gain brand recognition, and I believe this dishwasher a solid example of those efforts."

More about Fagor: The Fagor brand is currently present in 100 countries, employs more than 12,000 people in 17 countries and operates 16 factories in 3 continents.

The Fagor brand name has been previously most visible in the US since 1992 with high-quality stainless steel cookware as the core product offering, Fagor is currently positioned as a top cookware brand, sold at major retailers nationwide. Fagor America Inc, headquartered in Lyndhurst, NJ, USA is a wholly owned subsidiary of Fagor Electrodomesticos. **RO**



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Roth Hosts First of Three Events

BY DICK ROHLAND

The Minnetonka, MN showroom of Roth Distributing recently held the first of three Roth Signature Event series titled think.design. This first event featured Joan Bostic and Len Casey, both formerly with KWC America, Inc., Paul Leuthe with Sub-Zero/Wolf and Bill Coy, owner of Vintage U, Minneapolis, MN.

Leuthe spoke about "Award Winning Kitchen Designs," Casey presented "Kitchens of the future. Insights into the 21st Century Kitchen Design Trends," while Bostic provided insight into "Kitchen Innovation and Application."

At the end of the day long event, Bill Coy, a nationally known wine expert gave an Informative presentation sprinkled with humor on "Understanding the Complexity of Wine and Proper Storage."

During the presentation, Roth guests sampled three different fine wines paired with hors d'oeuvres provided by Chef Phillip Dorwart, owner of Create Catering and Consulting of Minneapolis. During the wine sipping, Coy explained the nuances in complementing a variety of food tastes with different wines. **RO**



Lisa Loushin-Crocker, Haute Kitchens with Don Gustason, North Star Kitchens.



Elaine Mahin, Roth with Janelle Erichson, On the Level Inc., Chaska MN.



Len Casey and Joan Bostic, both with KWC made presentations on design trends in the kitchen and bath industry.



Bill Coy, Vintage U gave an entertaining presentation on "Understanding the Complexity of Wine and Proper Storage."



Roth employees Judy Eisenreich, Kristi Ryan and Lori Karstensen served a delicious series of snacks created by Chef Philip Dorwart of Creative Caterers, Minneapolis, MN to complement three fine wines offered to Roth Think Design participants.



Vick Phillips, Roth, with wine glass in hand visited with Bill Coy of Vintage U. Bill is a nationally known wine expert who writes a wine column for the Minneapolis/St. Paul magazine and offers seminars on all aspects of the wine industry.

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Airport Home Appliance Celebrates 25 Years

REPORTED BY THE MEYER COMPANY



A surprise awaited the sleepy-eyed employees who were required to attend their annual awards banquet on an early and cold Tuesday morning this past spring in Airport Appliance's Hayward Ca. location.

As they checked in and affixed their name badges on their lapels they were greeted by the Van Eeghen family and guest speaker, Paul Myer, who was ready to begin the Awards presentation. Don Van Eeghen stood up, irritated, wanting to know when the breakfast buffet would be ready. He knew many of the employees had driven through horrendous traffic to get there at that hour and felt that they were probably hungry...they took the bait...Paul played along and asked if any one minded that they eat first and then start the meeting. Everyone agreed... one-by-one the 65 associates walked into the warehouse (where the caterers were supposed to be) and were stunned to find 5 super stretch limos and a flute of champagne waiting for them!

A special DVD was created to be played in each limo congratulating them on another fantastic, record year. The limo headed west toward San Francisco on their way to the Carnelian Room, on the 52nd floor atop the BofA building for a "special" breakfast/ Awards Ceremony.

"We have so much to be thankful for, we could not have done it without this group of incredible people. We wanted to WOW them and give them an awards banquet to remember" said Kate Van Eeghen. **RO**

NEWS FLASH

Chinese Shoppers Go for 'Kidult' Home Appliances

THE KOREA TIMES—Jane Han, Staff Reporter



While many local consumers eye big and fancy home appliances, Chinese shoppers are going for smaller and cuter air conditioners, refrigerators and washing machines to better fit their lifestyles.

Consumer needs are changing throughout major cities in China as the number of out-of-town workers are rising, the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) said Monday.

"Since many young men and women are living alone away from home, they want to buy appliances that are big enough for just one person," said Jeong Joon-kyu, a

researcher of the trade group's China division.

One of the most popular picks is the energy-saving mini washing machine, priced at around 140,000 to 190,000 won, which has a capacity of about 2 to 4 kilograms.

Kidult products include appliances that have an animation design, as if made for child consumers. **RO**



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36" Bottom-Freezer 2-door



18", 24" Wine cooler

FCI Home Appliances, LLC—Company History

WHO IS FCI HOME APPLIANCES?

FCI is a new brand in North America, but has a long history of manufacturing high quality cooking products. Fulgor Cooking Industries or “FCI” is a subsidiary of Fulgor SpA Elettrodomestici with its corporate headquarters and manufacturing facilities in Gallarate, Italy.

A HERITAGE OF EXCELLENCE

Fulgor opened shop in 1949 and a specialty cooking products company was born. Fulgor has been a family owned and operated manufacturing company. Throughout its long history, Fulgor has been building handcrafted gas and electric cooking products which exceed industry standards. In 1994, Fulgor began a long and successful relationship with several leading brands in North America as an OEM supplier. Now, we are introducing to the North American market our distinctive Euro-Italian design—FCI.

We are truly excited to showcase our high quality, high performing appliances, with design and style to enhance any kitchen environment, to the Independent and Specialty Retailers here in the North American market place.

PRODUCTS DESIGNED FOR THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF THE AMERICAN CONSUMER

At FCI, our aim is to produce products that meet the unique needs of the American consumer by combining modern technology, high performance, exciting Euro-Italian design, and expert Italian craftsmanship. FCI embraces the philosophy of delivering value to exceed its customer’s expectations. We will continue to push the boundaries of innovation as we launch even more products over the next 18 months, all designed specifically with the American consumer in mind. Our vision is to provide innovative products to raise the bar in the cooking appliance industry. Fulgor was the first European manufacturer of self cleaning ovens with the American consumer in mind, yet manufactured in Italy.

QUALITY AND DEPENDABILITY

At FCI, we have no doubt that our credibility in producing top quality products will earn your confidence. We set high standards for quality and thoroughly test 100% of our product. Long-term warranties demonstrate not only quality, but also our willingness to stand by our products. We offer a full two-year warranty that includes both parts and labor. In addition, we offer a limited third-year warranty with consumers responsible to pay only a \$50 flat rate fee for a service call.

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The FCI brand is sold exclusively through a growing network of Independent Distributors who target the Independent and Specialty Retailer. We are committed to developing lasting relationships with Distributors and Dealers who believe in the benefits of our products and will take the time with the consumer to expertly explain the value added features and benefits of the FCI products. A commitment to help us build the FCI brand will pay dividends to you for years to come. We clearly understand that strong alliances will be central to our success as we embark on this exciting journey. Please visit our website at www.fciappliances.com to learn more. **RO**



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Amco Distributing Receives U-Line Award

BY RITA A. LEONARD

On July 6, staff at Amco Distributing gathered for a U-Line Chairman's Award presentation, followed by a celebration luncheon. Brian Pinch, Independent Manufacturer's Rep for U-Line, presented the award to Chuck Westergren, VP of Amco. "This annual sales award is presented in honor of Amco's total sales volume of U-Line products in fiscal year 2006," said Pinch.

Amco Sales Rep Dennis Grennan, who officially added Outside Sales to his territory in July, noted that the company was premiering 2 industry exclusive appliance models. "We're introducing a new U-Line beverage center, Model #2175BEV, that features a new interior design with a black interior that gives an added air of luxury," he said. Sales Manager Carey Martin said, "We're also adding a wood-front overlay style for U-Line's wine captain drawer storage model, #2275DWR." Martin noted that Amco has carried U-Line products since 1999.

Staff admired the polished wood and crystal Chairman's Award, and then celebrated with a fried chicken dinner. Warm weather is expected to spur even more sales of U-Line products: built-in under-counter refrigeration, wine storage, and ice production appliances. **RO**



Chuck Westergren VP at AMCO receives 2006 U-Line award from Brian Pinch, Independent Manufacturer's Representative for U-Line.



Amco Distributing staff includes, L to R, Dennis Grennan, Inside/Outside Sales; Ian Jordan, Warehouseman; Chuck Westergren, VP of Amco; 4th, Samson Lee, Inside/Outside Sales; and Carey Martin, Sales Manager.




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Standard TV & Appliance Hosts HBA Social

BY RITA A. LEONARD

The Beaverton Branch of Standard TV & Appliance hosted a June 14 After Hours Social for the Oregon Home Builders Association. The event welcomed builders, designers, vendors and remodelers to explore the 17 live kitchen vignettes on-site. Each complete kitchen showcased the work of local designers and cabinetmakers, and featured appliances by major manufacturers.

Standard's Marketing Director Dan Reese and Builder Manager Fred Graetzer greeted over 100 guests at the event. Reese pointed out that vignette #18, an outdoor kitchen featuring DACOR appliances, would open in the summer. "We hope to have 2 more outdoor kitchens soon, each with the latest in outdoor refrigeration and Barbeques," he said. "Drakes 7 Dee's is the contractor for all of the outdoor kitchens."

"Our display here, open less than a year, is unlike that of any other appliance retailer on the west coast," Reese continued. "Our partnership with local designers and cabinet workers allowed them free rein in design styling, resulting in everything from small condo kitchens to a large Demo Cooking School vignette. We have a full range of cooking and cleanup appliances in designs from pioneer to modern styling."

Clients love exploring the variety of kitchen layouts in Standard's showroom, searching for something that especially appeals to their needs. There is even a unique "Universal Kitchen," an ADA-friendly vignette created by CAPS-certified designer Lora Creswick, owner of In The Works Design.

Creswick says that builders are becoming more familiar with installing elements of the Universal Kitchen, which centers on a 6-foot-long section of floating counter space. The unique concept features an interconnected sink, storage drawer and Electrolux induction cooktop counter that glides up and down for about a foot, to accommodate the needs of either wheelchair or extra-tall users. An Allure remote-control hood by Broan vents cooking odors.

| continued on page 40 |



The Viking Professional kitchen is explored by Angie Arnett-L from John L. Scott Realtors, and Andrew Scheidt-R, owner of Central Air Inc.



The Beaverton branch of Standard TV & Appliance features 17 live kitchen vignettes built by local designers & cabinetmakers.



Diane Keaton, NWSID, owner of Diane Keaton Interiors, designed the Dacor Millennia kitchen.



The JennAir Vignette is manned by JennAir Area Territory Manager Kelley Babcock and a JennAir Demo Chef.



The Thermador kitchen is featured by Glenda MacAdam, Sales consultant for Standard TV & Appliance.



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Other design elements include shelves that pull down or out, drawers with fully extendable glides, deeper knee spaces and toe kicks, and a single pull-out Fisher & Paykel dishwasher drawer. An adjacent work island features a Frigidaire side-swing oven, GE Profile microwave/convection oven, and a Franke scale recessed into the countertop.

The demonstration kitchens were hosted by guest chefs who prepared an array of finger foods to tempt the palate and showcase appliance capabilities. Dan Studt and Carla Lillis from Bradlee Distributors were in the Wolf/Asko/SubZero/Best vignette designed by Julie Dejardin of Dejardin Design. Ann Leisy from Kitchen Consultants prepared bread pudding in the Electrolux/Icon Kitchen created by Northland Construction & Design, Inc. And Standard's Sales Associate Glenda MacAdam pointed out a Thermador professional gas range in the Thermador Kitchen designed by the Coopridge Group.

Additional displays included walls of demo hoods and wall ovens, an espresso bar and a gas fireplace. Other live vignettes featured appliance brands such as Bosch, Fisher & Paykel, KitchenAid, Frigidaire, Whirlpool, JennAir, Viking, GE Monogram and GE Profile. Dave Giulietti, owner of Giulietti/Schouten Architects, explored the pioneer style Heartland Kitchen. "I have a client who's using one of these Heartland ovens," he noted.

Diane Keaton Interiors and Carole Jackson Design showcased Dacor and Frigidaire appliances in their live kitchens. Dacor District Sales Manager Michael Zivanich returned from a 4-year stint in L.A. as National Sales Trainer to cook at the on-site Dacor Cooking School vignette. "We host weekly and monthly classes and special events here," he said, posing with fellow Dacor chef Margaret Joyce alongside a new Dacor ER48 6-burner gas range.

HBA members gathered for a brief meeting and social hour adjacent to the Dacor Cooking School kitchen, sharing information and networking before departing with a host of new ideas. **RO**



Dave Giulietti, owner of Giulietti/Schouten Architects, explores a wall oven in the Heartland vignette.



Ann Leisy, a cook for Kitchen Consultants, prepared bread pudding in the Electrolux/Icon kitchen.



Bradlee Distributors' Dan Studt & Carla Lillis cook at the vignette featuring Wolf/SubZero/Asko/Best appliances.



The Whirlpool vignette is showcased by Thomas Caddy-L, with National Marketing Associates, and Drake Davis-R, owner of Drake's Surface Clean & Stain.



Designer Lora Creswick demonstrates her Universal Kitchen with the adjustable counter at maximum height. Notice adjustable under-counter electrical & plumbing fixtures.



Examining the Frigidaire kitchen are: L-Patty Ragan, President of Alarm & Access Control Technologies, and R-Sherry Brown, representing the Executive Officers Club.



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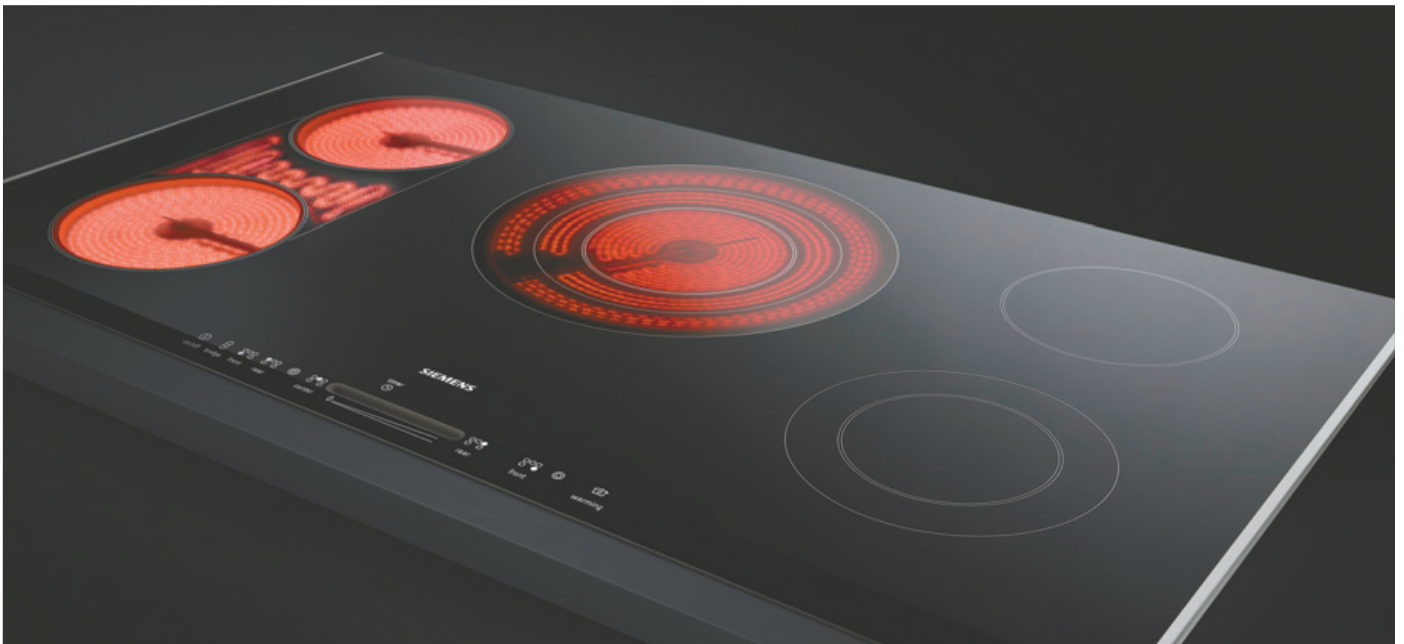
Siemens Home Appliances and Brand Source Join Forces, Launch New Line of Luxury Built-ins

HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA June 21, 2007 – Siemens home appliances will partner with Anaheim, California-based Brand Source for the national launch of its new collection of built-in luxury appliances. Siemens, the number one appliance brand in Germany, as well as Europe's leading maker of built-ins, is known for technological innovation, precision engineering, and pure European style. Brand Source is one of the nation's most respected appliance retailers, with more than 2200 independent dealers committed to service, selection and value.

"We are very excited about the opportunity to partner with an outstanding and recognized brand like Siemens, and we plan to make it a cornerstone of our marketing and merchandising efforts for the future," says Bob Lawrence, CEO of Brand Source.

forward to a continued, long-term alliance," says Franz Bosshard, President and CEO of BSH Home Appliances Corporation.

Flagship Siemens products that will be available to consumers through Brand Source beginning in July 2007 include avantGarde™ iSlide Convection Wall Ovens and avantGarde™ touchSlide™ Electric Cooktops. The unique iSlide feature on the ovens allows cooks to "scroll" their finger around a circular groove to control the temperature, much like selecting a tune on the latest music player. Similarly, the cooktops feature touchSlide™ controls instead of knobs or buttons, putting 17 different power levels at the cook's fingertips. Both products offer the ultimate in control and precision as well as striking good looks.



The Siemens built-in appliances blend German engineering, European styling, pure flush design, and a host of innovative features to create attainable luxury for the American kitchen. The line includes gas, electric and induction cooktops, convection wall ovens, ventilation units, refrigeration, dishwashers, professional coffee, and laundry systems.

"Partnering with Brand Source will be an important element for the successful launch of our Siemens brand throughout the U.S. From the very beginning of our discussions with Bob Lawrence, it has been a privilege working with Brand Source, and we are looking

About Siemens home appliances

Since 1847, Siemens has been at the forefront of technological progress. Known for its culture of pushing the limits of technological advancement, today Siemens is a global leader in electronics and electrical engineering in a wide variety of high-tech business fields. With its appliance products, Siemens combines innovative thinking, precision engineering, and a pure European style to create the world's most advanced home appliances. **RO**

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Evo Leads the Trend | *continued from page 8* |

stand-alone presentations or interconnected stations. We're moving away from angular design to more natural, environmental styling."

"Everyone asks about the name," he says with a smile. "It's a spin on the word 'evolution'. We feel we're the cutting edge of a new style of entertaining. The circular technology promotes a more convivial, 'gathering' aspect to the preparation and sharing of food. Our purpose is to create social cooking experiences without isolating the cook from the company."

The Evo experience is part of a dynamic change occurring in the grocery business as well. Food purveyors want to connect their products with the whole cooking experience. Many grocers use Evo grills in-store, inviting shoppers to share in the fresh preparation of food purchased there. Here, the appliance provides a show for the shoppers. Accoutrements are provided with each unit sold. Every grill comes with 2 spatulas, a bench scraper, cleaning kit and cookbook. "We're inviting customers to dive right in and enjoy the fun," says Shingler.

"My mom was Italian, and we loved hanging out with her in the kitchen for good food and talk," he recalls. "We aim to incorporate that social aspect into our products. We also design to a green standard, since our units are very energy-efficient and cause little smoke with a portable, vented hood."

Inner and outer heating elements provide independent temperature control, allowing a wide range of menu possibilities. Cooking temperatures are monitored from a digital LED display, and range on various products from 225 to 700 degrees. You can also place a pot or pan on the surface for boiling, braising, poaching, frying, or holding foods at set temperatures while fresh preparing entrees. "It's a very capable appliance," he says.

"We're already featured in some design books, and have appeared in such magazines as Food & Wine, Better Homes & Gardens, and Dwell," says Shingler. "We also have a blog: <http://evoamerica.blogspot.com>. We demonstrate that Evo can be an element of live action display cooking, or a component of engaging social conviviality in the home setting. Our current focus is on international market growth. Our goal is to be the leader in presentation cooking appliances." For information, call 503.626.1802, or check the web at www.evoamerica.com. **RO**



Evo Affinity 30G Built-In unit

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The Evo Affinity lets you cook everything from a pancake and egg breakfast, to bruschetta appetizers and seared scallops. With separate inner and outer temperature zones under a 25" circular cook surface, Evo is the perfect compliment to any social cooking space.

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Joe Foster Joins FCI Home Appliances, LLC

After more than 23 years with Whirlpool Corporation, Joe Foster has joined FCI Home Appliances as President & General Manager.

Joe held numerous sales and marketing leadership roles throughout his career at Whirlpool, including a four-year assignment from 1992 to 1996 at Whirlpool's European Business Unit based near Milan, Italy. He spent time significant time during his career at Whirlpool in various marketing & merchandising leadership roles in Cooking and Laundry products.

Joe told the Retail Observer that he could not resist the offer to join the FCI Team and the challenge of building a new up-market, premium brand targeted for the Independent & Specialty Retailers. Having spent 23 years with a large publicly held company like Whirlpool with exceptional products, brands, trade relations, and processes, Joe is very much looking forward to putting his experiences to work in a more entrepreneurial environment.

FCI is not new to Joe as he worked with their parent company Fulgor SpA Elettrodomestici near Milan, Italy during his time with Whirlpool Europe (see page 34 for more on Fulgor). Joe told the Retail Observer that under his leadership in 1992 that Whirlpool brand purchased B/I Self Cleaning Ovens from Fulgor for sale in several European markets. The self cleaning oven was a real novelty back then in Europe and Fulgor was leading the innovation in this category in Europe.

Joe looks forward to personally engaging with the dealers to understand how FCI can better serve their needs. **RO**



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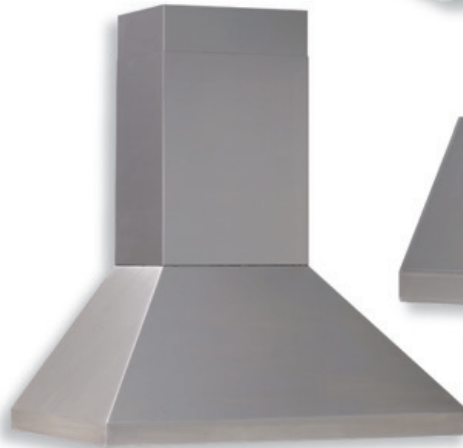
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- 8 NKBA Puget Sound Golf Tournament-
Trilogy Golf Club, Redmond Ridge, WA
- 19-22 Nationwide Prime Time-
Venetian Hotel, Las Vegas, NV
- 22 NKBA Northern California Chapter-
University Electric, Santa Clara, CA
- 26-31 Brand Source National Convention-
Paris Hotel, Las Vegas, NV

SEPTEMBER

- 18 United Stores Expo Event-
Norwalk Marriott, Norwalk, CA
- 20 NKBA Puget Sound Chapter-
Albert Lee Specifier's Night, Seattle, WA
- 20 NKBA Alaska Chapter-
Bayshore Clubhouse, Anchorage, AK
- 25 NKBA Northern California Chapter-
Artisans Showcase, Palo Alto Country Club, Palo Alto, CA

OCTOBER

- 8-11 Fall NARI Board of Directors Meeting-
Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas, NV
- 9-12 The Remodeling Show-
Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV
- 11 NKBA Northern California Chapter-
Standards of Excellence, San Jose, CA

NOVEMBER

- 13-15 Brand Source-Northwest-
Embassy Suites South Center, Tukwila, WA

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 and subscribe.



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<p>Innovation BBQ-Grill</p> <p>Created world's first high-end stainless BBQ-grill with infrared rotisserie burner, copied by every BBQ-grill manufacturer in the world</p> <p>1992</p>	<p>Innovation Outdoor Grills</p> <p>Created industry's first versatile BBQ-grill with infrared grill section, stainless burners and night-lights</p> <p>2003</p>	<p>Innovation Patent Pending</p> <p>140° simmer -19,000 BTU's per hour Consumes less gas & produces higher power than any other sealed burner</p> <p>Power-Flo™ Burner System</p> <p>2006/2007</p>	<p>Innovation Patent Pending</p> <p>Puts rollers on the racks and not in the oven, thereby improving the oven's ability to clean itself</p> <p>Flex-Roll™ Oven Racks</p> <p>2006/2007</p>	<p>Innovation Patent Pending</p> <p>Created industry's first motorized rotisserie system in a pro-style range</p> <p>Moto Rotis™ System</p> <p>2006/2007</p>	<p>Innovation</p> <p>Created the Precision Series™ in 30", 36", 48", and 60" ranges and rangetops</p> <p>2006/2007</p>

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High Tech Appliances

BY LEE BOUCHER



July 3, 2007. I read in this morning's *San Jose Mercury News* that 700,000 iPhones were sold the first weekend it came on the market. Over-enthusiastic techno-geeks camped out in front of the stores 24 hours before they opened so they would be sure to be one of the first to acquire this 21st century wonder. What is this marvel

and what does it do? *"It is a mobile handset and is built around a large touch screen, which replaces ordinary numbers and letter keys. In addition to making voice calls, users can check e-mail, surf the Web and listen to their iTunes music with the phone."*

I'm sorry, but I can't relate to such fury about another electronic gadget. As a low-tech old man I don't even have a cell phone. I have a house phone, a business phone and an old computer in my office. I'm not the kind of guy who walks around shopping in the Safeway supermarket talking on a cell phone while I'm trying to find the taco sauce my wife wanted on the shopping list. If I want to listen to music, I crank up the Bose in my office and listen to the news or classical music or put in a Dixieland Jazz CD. E-Mail? I check it twice a day—at most. Why do I want to surf the web? I get a daily newspaper and too many magazines. I now think I know what's going on in our troubled world. In addition, I watch the objective news by Jim Lehrer on PBS most nights.

A couple of years ago I went to Kepler's bookstore in Menlo Park, CA, to listen to Dave Barry, a humorist columnist for the *Miami Herald*. I got there an hour early so I could get a good seat, but all the seats were already taken so I stood at the back of the room. Barry is now on a writing vacation. He wrote an article in 2005 entitled, "Appliances Are Getting Out Of Hand". Below are some excerpts:

"You would have a home where the dishwasher can be turned on from your office and the refrigerator knows when it's out of milk and the bathroom scale transmits your weight to the gym".

"Listen appliance manufacturers, we don't NEED a dishwasher that we can communicate from afar and likewise we don't need a

refrigerator that knows when we're out of milk. We already have a foolproof system of knowing when we're out of milk. We ask our wife. As for a scale that transmits our weight to the gym: Are you NUTS? What if our gym decided to transmit our weight to all those other appliances on the Internet? If our refrigerator found out what our weight was we'd never get the door open again"

"Is this the kind of future you want, consumers? Do you want appliances that are smarter than you? Of course not. Your appliances should be DUMBER than you just like your furniture, your pets and your representatives in Congress. I am urging you to let the appliance industry know, by e-mail, letter and fax, that when it comes to "smart" appliances, you vote NO."

In the August 2007 edition of *Consumer Reports*, there are in-depth articles about some "smart" appliances. It took Samsung to task about its Wireless ICE side-by-side multi-media models.

"Multimedia refrigerators might be the wave of the future, but our tests of Samsung's Wireless ICE RH269LB (SH) show this new \$3500 side-by-side may not be ready for prime time.

Annoyances included sub par sound quality and a small 10.4-inch screen that delivered an unimpressive picture compared to most stand-alone TVs. The screen is hard to see from the side when attached. And its battery lasts just a little over an hour with the screen detached and it takes a day to recharge. You'll also have to find space for the 2x10.5x8-inch wireless transmitter that sends the fridge signals."

I can understand the excitement of electronic engineers when they figured out how to put the Samsung Wireless ICE together, but I agree with *Consumer Reports's* final gripe:

"This multitasking fridge proved mediocre at keeping temperatures consistent, a refrigerator's primary job."

You've probably figured out by now that this writer is not ready for the 21st century and is just satisfied to have a TV with an on and off switch and a volume control. Who needs to watch 4 channels at the same time, anyway? **RO**

The views of Dave Barry are not the views of the Retail Observer and are used to make a point in Lee Boucher's editorial.

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I've had numerous phone calls asking why I sold the Retail Observer and how did it happen. It's real easy to explain why I sold—but how it all happened is a different story. For several months I had been considering selling—Ruth, my beautiful wife and financial manager, has had several strokes and is now a semi-invalid. I'm not getting any younger (88 years) and retirement sounded like a real great idea.

I was at NARI (National Association Remodeling Industry) of San Jose's annual Christmas party at the Marriott Hotel in San Jose. While I was taking pictures and meeting people a guy that I have seen at other functions in the appliance business approached me and said, "I certainly appreciate your coming to our Christmas party. I enjoy your magazine—I read it from cover to cover."

I said, "Thank you, I appreciate your comments. By the way, the magazine is for sale. Do you know anyone that might be interested in buying it?"

To this day I can't understand what compelled me to tell him I wanted to sell the magazine. Maybe a seventh sense? He said to me, "I would like to buy your magazine."

That's how it all started. Moe Lastfogel is the new owner with his wife Eliana and has made some wonderful changes. The magazine will now be on the internet—he has brightened and changed the graphics and overall design so it is more readable and easier to follow the graphics and articles. He is building a most successful relationship with the advertisers and working hard to make sure that you, dear friend and reader, will continue to enjoy the magazine. Lee Boucher and I will continue to be associated with the magazine.

REGRETS

Dick Wegner, who lived in Healdsburg, Ca, passed away recently. Dick formerly owned Solem's Appliance and operated this small store for 18 years. He retired in 2006 to play golf and relax but lung cancer did him in.

Over 150 friends and family celebrated his life at the Healdsburg Golf Club on Wednesday, June 27 2007.

RETIREES

John Mitchell, vice president and general manager of Tri State Distributors in Kent, WA retires as of July 31st. He has worked for the company for 31 years and began his career as a sales territory manager in Eastern Washington and twenty two years as vice president and general manager. John will continue to work part time from his home on special projects, but will no longer involved in day-to-day management. Greg Truchot will take over sales and operations duties on August 1st. He has worked for the company in various capacities since 1995. We wish him the best of luck.



HOW'S BUSINESS?

Consumers are cutting back on appliance purchases along with other big ticket items as high gasoline prices continue to depress discretionary spending and consumer confidence. Major appliance shipments declined slightly more than 11% in May as consumers surveyed in May showed a reluctance to purchase big ticket items.

Home sales are down and almost non existent in some areas. Average time to sell a home was over 6 months in many areas and the number of mortgage foreclosures is at an all time. The housing recession has definitely hurt appliance sales but the overall economy is in good shape. It should be noted that the housing slump DID NOT occur because

of the economy! It occurred because of prohibitive mortgage rates, tight credit, and too many mortgages granted to under financed consumers. Helping the economy in general are these factors:

- 1) Consumer spending remains good except on some big ticket items
- 2) Manufacturing strength is OK and more jobs have been added in the last six months, and
- 3) Capital spending has accelerated since January.

Look for the economy to grow about 2.8 to 3.0 during the rest of the year. **RO**

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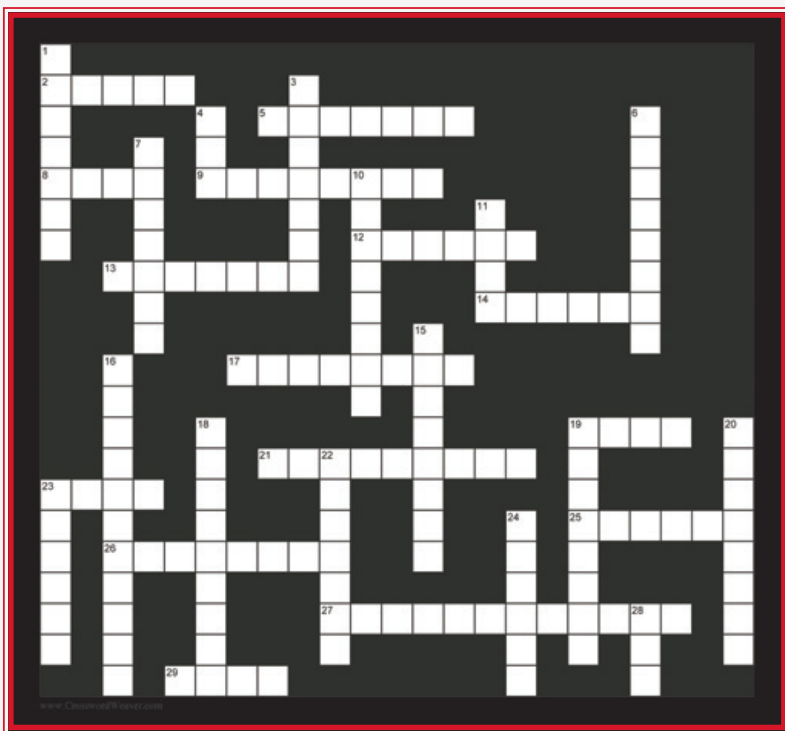
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(PUZZLE ANSWERS ARE FOUND IN THE EDITORIAL AND AD PAGES OF EACH ISSUE OF THE RETAIL OBSERVER.)



ACROSS

- 2 _____ Orleans Community Center Project
- 5 Century _____ in Minneapolis
- 8 Color Impacts _____
- 9 Franz _____ President and CEO of BSH Home Appliances
- 12 _____ SpA Elettrodomestici
- 13 Chef Phillip _____
- 14 Joined FCI Home Appliances Joe _____
- 17 Builder Manager Fred _____
- 19 GE _____ series
- 21 San Francisco _____ Room
- 23 Chuck Westergren, VP of _____
- 25 Evo _____ cooking
- 26 Outdoor cabinets
- 27 Fagor Advanced _____ System
- 29 Just add _____ water

DOWN

- 1 ASKO in Seattle
- 3 Lou _____ Jr.
- 4 Meyer Appliance joined _____
- 6 Franke _____ work center
- 7 Marvel's new sink
- 10 Frigidaire laundry
- 11 Blue interior with 2 fans
- 15 Excel Distributing _____ California
- 16 The National _____ of the Remodeling Industry
- 18 Roth _____ Event
- 19 Petters _____ Brands
- 20 _____-Sonoma gift card
- 22 Charlene _____ Dacor Showroom Manager
- 23 Raymond _____ Meyer III
- 24 New combi-steam oven
- 28 Bob Lawrence, _____ of Brand Source

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

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In the September issue of the *Retail Observer* you will be able to go on-line to complete the crossword. 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 next month for the prize puzzle online at www.retailobserver.com.

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