

The *Retail Observer*

December, 2007

The Monthly News Magazine With Personality

Vol.18, Issue 9

NEWS FLASH

Lee Boucher Retires From Second Career

Lee—Thanks for 17 years of service and friendship to the entire appliance industry. Your editorials and smile will be greatly missed.

(See page 42 for Lee's final editorial.)



Long-time friends Chuck Edmonds and Lee Boucher



Building Industry Association of Southern California

BIS '07

BY MOE LASTFOGEL

LONG BEACH, CA, November 15-16, 2007—The Southern California Chapter of the BIA combined with Electrolux and a host of approximately 400 other vendors came together to create a show small enough to see in a day, yet large enough to keep your interest. The show was set at the Long Beach Convention center in Southern California, located near the grounds that once hosted the Long Beach Pike amusement park. Many of the booths at this show took on a casual, almost club-like setting, with big couches and plasma TVs giving the space a relaxing home like atmosphere. Kegs of beer didn't hurt either in enticing the builders into the booths, helping to put these potential buyers at ease to discuss the needs of the builder in the upcoming year and how to fulfill those needs in this ever changing housing market.

The Green Movement was a focal point at this growing event. A 6000 square foot area named the "Technology-Green Pavilion" was opened for the first time, featuring 42 tech companies highlighting their products to the show attendees, while another 48 showed their "Green" in their own booths on the regular show floor.

| *continued on page 6* |



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Our 18th Year!

Retail Observer

5542 Monterey Road #258
San Jose, CA 95138
408.281.4409
800.393.0509
Fax 408.360.9371
Email: info@retailobserver.com
Website: www.retailobserver.com

To receive a copy of the
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www.retailobserver.com/subscribe/

Eliana Barriga
Creative Director and Publisher

Moe Lastfogel
Director of Sales and Marketing

Chuck Edmonds
Editorial Advisor

Graphics Department
Email: graphics@retailobserver.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Lee Boucher—*Editorial*

Sheri Neville—*Seattle/Los Angeles*

Dick Rohland—*Minneapolis*

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MOE'S MUSINGS

Are you a "Hallmarkian"?

Well, we've made it through Thanksgiving, Black Friday and Cyber Monday. We still have Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Christmas and New Year's yet to come. The holidays can bring hope and joy, stress and of course credit card debt. I am already personally feeling the stress on my wallet after the Thanksgiving shopping weekend. Wow... what a crazy scene, to be uprooted from football, family and food just to stand in lines longer than those at Disneyland in order to get that incredible advertised deal. Yes, the holiday spirit is in the air—children and pedestrians beware! To have over-zealous shoppers pushing and shoving their way through the open doors before the break of dawn, dashing about in a frenzy with their heavily laden shopping carts, to me is complete and utter madness. Is this what the holidays have come to?

I think we have forgotten the true reason of the season. It's time to ask ourselves "What is the true meaning of our holidays?" We personally carry on our holiday traditions through story telling and rituals that bind us together and create family traditions that we pass on to the next generation. We celebrate our cultural history. While growing up, I understood the reasons we celebrated and what the true history of the celebration was. Today, many seem to celebrate Easter and Christmas on a level that has no relevance to their true meanings. When did the Easter Bunny or Santa Claus get mentioned in a passage? I don't remember a passage anywhere that talked about a day of flowers and heart shaped candy boxes. What is a Holy Day and what is a Hallmark Holiday? Sure, retail sales go up and the economy flourishes, but what was the original intent of the remembrance? I was raised with the belief that giving was more important than receiving. The act of giving should be an expression of the heart as opposed to the need to buy an obligatory gift. We took care in making sure we handled ourselves in a courteous manner and would never do harm to anyone or anything (except the Turkey) in creating our holiday atmosphere. If you couldn't afford to give gifts, you made them. If you couldn't afford the big dinner, you came together potluck style. Everyone joined together and celebrated the true meaning of the holiday. What has happened to that tradition? Today we have a holiday for anything you can buy a card and a gift for.

It's time to get back to basics. Are you willing to be part of the solution and not part of the problem? Are you willing to think before you get in a fight at a retailers' location over a \$30 widget or try to bribe a salesman to get to the front of the line for a big sales event. Let's talk about giving back and helping out. Let's talk about family and bringing back the values that make a difference in the world by starting at home with the ones you love. Again this isn't about the religion or the holiday, it's about their truths and teachings. They have been held sacred in the past; let's keep our traditions rich and meaningful for the future.

*We wish you
Happy and Safe Holidays
and a Great New Year.*

~ Moe and Eliana



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Exhibitors from the appliance side of the show, such as Purcell Murray, had their booth placed close to the show entrance displaying a full array of their builder oriented product lines including the new Fuego BBQ. Electrolux had a central expo kitchen that used chocolate fondue melting on their 36" induction cooktop to get buyers to hang around a while to learn what new pieces were on the horizon. Also showing were Imperial Range Hoods and Liebherr via ALMO Specialty Distributing. ALMO showed their full line of "Green" oriented refrigeration products, highlighted by a demonstration of Liebherr's sealed freezer systems that bring temperatures down as low as -40F. The event also featured over 30 classes and lectures for the builders to enhance their skills not only in the field, but in the office too, learning how to grow their business and tackle some of the challenging issues that face builders in this very large industry today. | *continued on page 10* |



Attendees enjoy refreshments at a BIS club style booth.



Gerard Mouloutout and Gary Tildon of Imperial Cal products show their new hood liner display.



GE Café™

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imagination at work

GE Café™

Bertazzoni Offers New 24" Compact Professional Range Perfectly Sized For The Smaller Kitchen



(GUASTALLA, ITALY - October 22, 2007) — Bertazzoni, the leading Italian manufacturer of precision-engineered kitchen lifestyle products, has expanded its popular Professional Series line with the introduction of a 24-inch model gas range. This new addition to the popular Bertazzoni line-up features the full performance and excellence of the wider models, yet it has a compact design for the smaller kitchen. “Clean lines, good proportions and a functional ergonomic design are uniquely combined in this designer pro compact model,” said Paolo Bertazzoni, the company’s fifth generation president. “Featuring a size perfectly suited for the urban kitchen, it has the same powerful, flexible and accurate cooking performance found in large professional range models.” The stainless steel 24” Professional Series is highlighted by a best-in-class one piece work top, four burners, a gas oven and a gas broiler. The model also includes a dedicated simmer burner for the utmost in delicate cooking, an easy one-touch ignition system and settings that allow for traditional operation for gas cooking or a convection oven, dehydration, and fan-only defrosting. All this, plus Bertazzoni’s exclusive 15,000 BTU triple-ring high-efficiency burner make it a top performer.

Compact Precision Showpiece Blends Elegance and Substance

Design-forward sophistication is a hallmark of the 24” Professional Series, where the model’s size and proportion beautifully appoint smaller living spaces. Additional features include:

- Child-safe valves on all burners that stop gas flow if the flame goes out—even in case of power outage
- Wide-area infrared oven gas grill, perfect for powerful searing and broiling over a large surface area
- Uniquely balanced air-flow fan, which provides even heat distribution for single and multi-level roasting and baking—without flavor crossover
- Heavy-duty cast iron grates for easy movement of any kind of pot, a wok adapter and simmer plate
- Triple-glaze door to ensure minimal heat loss and low-temperature external surfaces
- Storage below the oven and internal oven lights to supply ample illumination at each cooking level
- Design-matched backsplashes and adjustable ventilator hoods with three settings for extraction levels of unwanted steam and heat.

The Professional Series is also available in 30-, 36-, and 48-inch models, via an extensive distributor network throughout North America. Suggested retail pricing begins at \$1,999.

| *continued on page 10* |



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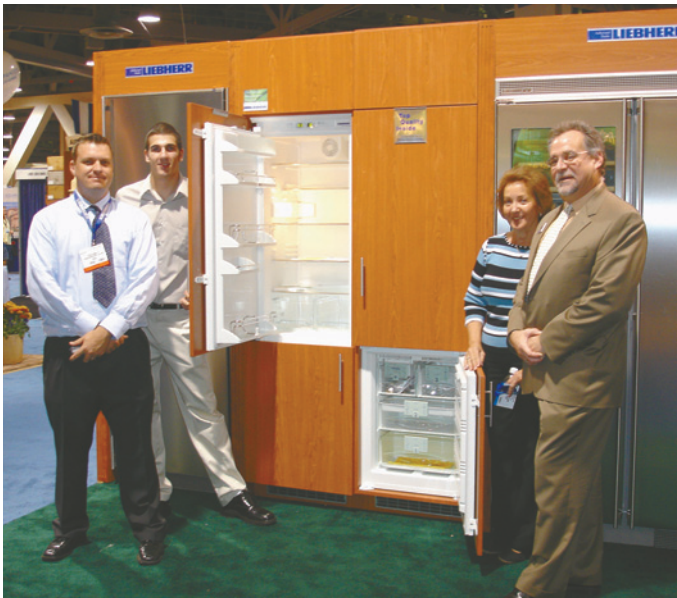
Laundry — it's all we do.

All work and no play make our builders an unhappy lot. BIA SoCal couldn't have picked a better venue and location to hold this mid week event for both vendors and attendees alike, extending vacation time with plenty of playful options to keep you going all weekend long. Located right across the water from the convention center is the world-famous RMS Queen Mary cruise ship, now a hotel and museum open to the public with excellent restaurants onboard. Pristine California beaches, fine dining restaurants, nightclubs, boating and of course, everyone's favorite place on earth, Disneyland! For those there during the show only, the BIS Bash at the Renaissance Hotel was a nice distraction from the day to day routine. Those who were up for

an evening of entertainment joined the BIS Bash VIP after party at The Vault 350 night club, provided by nine vendors to help make this an evening to remember, including Electrolux's builder division. The show used shuttles from the convention center back and forth to the club to make it a safe evening event for all. Other events included the 5th Annual Go for the Green Golf Tourney at the Trump National Golf Club, the 41st Annual BIA/SC Awards, Officer Installation Dinner and the last call event: the BIS After Party held on the grounds of the venue. This trade show would be a great opportunity in 2008 for an appliance dealer to make a showing in front of this large group of potential buyers, as none were present. **RO**



Purcell Murray's Dave Nichols, Shaun Heaslet, Joe Kudy and Cheryl Barnett gather around their new offering from Fuego.



Steve Rebozzi, Alex Kremenetskiy, Becky Moulton and Larry Feldman of Almo Specialty showing off the newest from Liebherr.

About Bertazzoni

Bertazzoni is a fifth generation family-owned company, specializing in the production of ranges and cooking systems characterized by elegant, ergonomic designs, performance, professional quality, and incomparable value. Throughout its 125 years of operation, Bertazzoni and its stoves have been synonymous with Italian culture, style and engineering. Available first in Italy in 1882 and now sold internationally in more than 60 countries, Bertazzoni products have become an affordable indulgence for the inspired chef—combining streamlined architectural sophistication with precision-engineered cooking performance.

In the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy, where cooking is culture in the home of balsamic vinegar and parmesan cheese, the original Bertazzoni factory can still be found. Today, under the vision and leadership of Paolo Bertazzoni, the same quality craftsmanship and family legacy of entrepreneurial spirit endures. Bertazzoni's complete line of freestanding ranges, built-in cook tops, ventilation hoods and other design-coordinated accessories are represented through regionally-exclusive distributors and sales offices throughout the United States and Canada. For more information, visit www.bertazzoni-italia.com or call (866) 905-0010. **RO**

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NKBA Southern California 25th Founders Reunion Dinner

By Moe Lastfogel

Los Angeles, Ca. November 15th, 2007—Taix French Restaurant, a Los Angeles icon, located on the Sunset Strip was host to an evening of memories. Yes, as in most Hollywood parties there was a bevy of stars at hand. Not the stars of the big screen, but those people that are stars within our industry. With the likes of last year's NKBA Hall of Fame inductees Don and Kasnea Martin, as well as next year's inductee Ken Rohl, this was sure to be an evening to remember.

The event was designed to reconnect old friends and industry partners in the sharing of stories about the journey well travelled by all during the past 25 years. At the request of Dick Bergstrom, owner of VAH Marketing, the NKBA Southern California Chapter set out months ago to create this evening. Many calls and emails were sent out to new and old industry members as well as dear friends, to find the people that helped forge this strong local chapter. At over 500 members strong, this chapter has helped to set up the offshoot San Diego Chapter, the Central Coast and Valley Chapter and sub-chapter Coachella Valley/Inland Empire which combined lists more than 1,000 NKBA Members.

Many of the past presidents of the Chapter attended the event as well as long-time members of the early days (1967) when NKBA was the AIKD (American Institute of Kitchen Design.) The list of speakers was a who's who among nationally known lecturers, designers and teachers. It was well worth the time to listen to these tales of the past and the theme focused predominantly on fun, friends, and memories. Stories of influential members who have passed on, careers that were altered, group trips and major events that took place brought tears to some eyes. Old friends were re-acquainted and new ones were made. We would like to thank you Dick, for helping to bring this historic group together. **RO**



VAH Marketing's Bob Wells, Bob Bergstrom and Dick Bergstrom



Ken Rohl and Joan Scott



Don Martin



Eliana Barriga-Lastfogel *Retail Observer*, Mollyanne Sherman Mac Design and Moe Lastfogel *Retail Observer*



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Liebherr Refrigerators Gaining Momentum In The North American Market



With the confirmation that Liebherr is indeed introducing 36" refrigerators in 2008, the longtime refrigeration brand leader in Europe, will have the full complement of products to suit the North American market. The German refrigeration specialist began by offering six models of residential refrigerators to consumers in select American metropolitan cities in 2004. Thanks to excellent response from consumers, designers and architects, Liebherr refrigerators—in freestanding, built-in and fully-integrated product lines—are now available across the United States and Canada. The company is regularly launching new products—including its wine preservation products and an outdoor refrigerator—to keep up with consumer demand.

While the Liebherr name may be new in North America, the company's reputation in

Europe is well established, dating back over half a century. A family business, Liebherr's operations were started in 1949 by founder Hans Liebherr. An engineer, Hans Liebherr created a mobile, easy-to-assemble and affordable tower crane at the right time when Germany was re-building itself after World War II. The crane became the foundation for what grew to become a family of companies, producing a range of products including heavy construction equipment, transportation systems, aerospace components, and of course, refrigerators. To this day members of the Liebherr family are intimately involved in the operations of their multiple companies. In 2006, Liebherr's sales totaled over \$9 billion. Even with these high volumes of sales and continued global expansion, the company is still 100% family owned, and this means that the business decisions are always made for the long term.

The refrigeration arm of Liebherr was established in 1954 when Hans Liebherr—being an engineer and a pragmatist—read a statistic that only 20% of German homes had refrigerators. Seeing an opportunity he began

| continued on page 16 |

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Integrating–The Secret Behind it

The stylish answer to freshness: Integrated and out of sight. In high-end kitchens, Liebherr integrated appliances are the most stylish option available—they're totally out of sight.



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SBS 2415 – 5 Climate Zone

Liebherr Refrigerators | *continued from page 14* |

his appliance manufacturing operation. Since its inception, Liebherr refrigeration has consistently strived for excellence in quality and design. The result is a line of products that are not only aesthetically pleasing, but also highly efficient, and always at the forefront of engineering innovation. Prior to its foray into the North American market Liebherr's European offices were already receiving inquiries from designers in New York City and other urban centers, looking to source the appliances. As a company Liebherr saw an opportunity to expand sales into North America, the world's single largest market. "In North America there already existed a desire or willingness among consumers to spend more for a better product," explained Marc Perez, Vice President of Liebherr, North America. "The kitchen has become the center of the home. As people continue to spend more time at home and entertain more often in their kitchens, it's natural that they are looking for better, more efficient and silent appliances." Currently Liebherr is the only refrigeration line available in North America manufactured in Germany. While they are known in Europe as the leader in luxury refrigeration, Liebherr has had to build its reputation from the ground up in North America. This was supported through what Perez refers to as "a disciplined distribution strategy", a key component of which has been strong relationships with independent dealers. "We need to be with the right dealers," Perez explained. "We need dealers who are able to recognize the quality of our product, understand the Liebherr philosophy, and explain the benefits of our brand to consumers. This has always been the foundation and strength of the independent dealer."

A huge part of the Liebherr philosophy is a focus on energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. Proud to have the designation as "the greenest refrigeration on the planet," all Liebherr products offered in North America are ENERGY STAR qualified, and Liebherr was the first appliance manufacturer to achieve worldwide RoHS compliance. RoHS stands for the "Restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment." The European-based RoHS program prescribes that hazardous substances such as lead, cadmium, mercury and certain kinds of chrome, biphenyl and biphenyl ether be eliminated from products and manufacturing processes. While the program is not yet mandatory in North America, Liebherr decided to take a proactive approach. Liebherr is also making ultra-efficient LED lighting a standard with new products. "Liebherr has found better, greener ways to produce quality products using materials that are less damaging and have less impact on our eco-systems," Perez said. "Actions such as the RoHS compliance and making ultra-efficient LED lighting standard in new products show we are taking our commitment to the environment very seriously."

While the Liebherr refrigeration product line ranges in size from space-saving 24" to its soon-to-be launched 36" French door unit to the 48" side by side multi-temperature zone unit, all Liebherr refrigerators share basic similarities: better food preservation, better use of space, excellent energy efficiency and noise control, and beautiful contemporary design. With constant innovations—such as the BioFresh® system which allows fresh foods to last longer, or variable temperature compressor which eliminates "on" and "off" surges keeping the temperature consistent at all times—Liebherr distinguishes itself as a leader in the refrigeration industry.

For more information, visit www.liebherr-appliances.com. **RO**



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Purcell Murray And Fuego Join Forces

For 26 years, Purcell Murray has been distributing some of the best-known kitchen and bath products on the market. While they handle distribution in California and Northern Nevada for Bertazzoni, Best, Bosch, Broan, Franke, Gaggenau, Kindred, Thermador and U-Line, they are also the sole U.S. distributor for La Cornue.

But what's powered their growth through the years, despite rapidly changing market trends, economic turbulence, and countless other obstacles? The answer: a business model designed around transcending expectations. As founder Tim Murray puts it, "We don't see ourselves as just a distributor – delivering product to sales channels is only a starting point. Our goal is to deliver value to customers at every turn."



And Purcell Murray pursues that goal through a number of means. Their two 10,000 plus square foot showrooms (located in Brisbane and Huntington Beach) allow prospective buyers to experience products in true-to-life installation environments. These facilities also host a range of cooking classes and events featuring industry celebrities – giving customers and current owners a chance to get hands-on experience and familiarize themselves with the full potential of the products. And finally, Purcell Murray sponsors and promotes numerous rebates – making it easier for customers to take home the appliance they want.

So how does such a unique distributor decide what brands to carry? "It's simple," states Tim, "we build relationships with the



PURCELL MURRAY

best of the best and we never compromise." While pursuing an overall policy of excellence, Director of Marketing Kevin Murray explains that the company seeks brand partners based on two criteria: "First, every one of our brands strives for superior quality and design. Second, every one of our brands is distinguished by an extraordinary commitment to innovation." The facts certainly support Kevin's claim. Thermador literally invented the wall oven. La Cornue developed the natural convection oven. U-Line carries more product patents than any of its competitors. Between them, Purcell Murray's brands have pioneered innumerable industry breakthroughs.

And it should come as no surprise that their newest partner is Fuego Grills. Fuego stands out from scores of competitors,

with a bold mission of innovation – to redefine outdoor living. And the key to this mission is a revolutionary design that eliminates the need for an unsightly, unwieldy hood and offers plenty of counter-space. Kevin explains, "So outdoor get-togethers will no longer gravitate away from the grill, but toward it." Essentially, Fuego aims to recast the outdoor food preparation area in the same role as the kitchen: as a social center. But they won't be on their own, as Tim assures us: "Purcell Murray is dedicated to using all our resources to help Fuego get to where they're going."

All in all, Purcell Murray has spent more than two and a half decades focused on differentiating themselves. So it makes perfect sense that they've picked partners with the same focus. **RO**

Purcell Murray proudly distributes Bertazzoni, Best, Bosch, Braun, Franks, Fuego, Gaggenau, Kindred, La Cornue, Thermador and U-Line. © Purcell Murray Inc. 2007

Over the last 125 years, the Bertazzoni family has made more than ranges.
THEY'VE MADE HISTORY.



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Or, for further information, visit our Web site at www.purcellmurray.com.



In 1882, Antonio Bertazzoni made his family's name synonymous with culinary excellence.

They say it's impossible to improve on perfection. But the Bertazzoni family has been doing it for 125 years – ever since Antonio Bertazzoni built his first range. And recalling that original creation, the new Heritage series embodies over a century of Italian culinary passion and ground-breaking design innovations. And premier distributor Purcell Murray is honored to offer it through their exclusive network of dealers.



The Bertazzonis' first range became an instant classic, claiming the Florence Exhibition's Gold Medal.



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BERTAZZONI

NEWS FLASH F&P Appliances to Build Dishwasher Plant

NZPA | Thursday, 22 November 2007

Auckland-based Fisher & Paykel Appliances is to spend \$15 million building a dishwasher manufacturing plant in North America.

The company announced the move today, having earlier this year moved to close two operations in this country with the loss of nearly 450 jobs. The decision to build a new DishDrawer plant was in response to continuing North American sales growth, the company said. The plant was expected to be finished by late-2008 with first production in early 2009, although its location was yet to be decided. It would produce a new DishDrawer model, designed specifically for the North American market. "Our supply philosophy is to have small, efficient, manufacturing plants, in or close to the markets we participate in," Appliances chief executive John Bongard said. "This facility will supply our North American markets in a timely fashion, whilst at the same time reducing freight and working capital costs." The US was the largest market for the DishDrawer. The present DishDrawer factory in Dunedin would continue to manufacture products for other markets, including New Zealand, Australia and Europe. In August, Appliances said it was relocating its electronics factory from Auckland to Thailand with the loss of 96 jobs. That followed an announcement in April that 350 jobs were to go in Auckland with a decision to move the company's laundry plant, also to Thailand. At that time Mr Bongard blamed a combination of factors including high interest rates, persistently high exchange rates, and some trade and tariff policies. **RO**

PRESS RELEASE

Bosch Dishwasher Named One of BuildingGreen's Top-10 Products for 2007

Bosch, the appliance manufacturer known worldwide for setting industry standards in quietness and energy/water efficiency, announced today that its Evolution 800 Series SHE98 dishwasher has been selected as one of BuildingGreen's 2007 Top-10 Green Building Products. This annual award recognizes the most innovative products added to the GreenSpec® Directory during the past year or covered in Environmental Building News. Bosch's top of the line Evolution 800 Series dishwasher, which is the quietest and most energy efficient model in the country, was chosen for both its high efficiency and water saving attributes.

Bosch dishwashers are the quietest and most efficient in the industry, with premium models boasting a 42dBA sound level, virtually undetectable while running, while also leading the way in energy and water efficiency. Every Bosch dishwasher is ENERGY STAR® qualified and exceeds the stringent 2007 federal energy standards. The entire collection also features the ECOSENSE Wash Management System™, which examines the soil level in the water via an infrared light beam and customizes the wash cycle accordingly with 48 different options. Bosch's new ECOACTION™ feature on select models takes energy efficiency to the next level by reducing energy consumption by up to an additional 25% – with just the simple push of a button. These systems, along with other efficiency advancements, ensure that Bosch dishwashers use as little as 1.8 gallons of water per cycle while guaranteeing optimal wash results. In addition, the entire lineup offers the exclusive AQUASTOP® system, a superior leak protection system that automatically shuts the dishwasher off should it detect water in the base of the unit. **RO**



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An AGA Company

Thermador Redefines 'Cooking in Style' With a New Design



(HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA - October 19, 2007)—Thermador has introduced a modern, chiseled design to its full-line of luxury appliances that brings new meaning to the phrase “cooking in style.” Featuring new design elements such as stainless steel knobs and an ergonomically angled door handle, the end result is a style that perfectly blends a striking form with high-powered function, affording consumers the look and feel of professional-quality cooking in the comfort of their own home. From the iconic Thermador built-in wall ovens to the redesigned Professional Series Ranges and striking silver-mirrored induction cooktops, this refreshed aesthetic confirms the brand’s reputation as the leading name in luxury appliances.

In total, all Thermador ranges, wall ovens, gas cooktops, microwaves, ventilation and dishwashers will feature the new design style.

Wall Ovens

A pioneer of the world’s first built-in wall oven, Thermador showcases its dramatic new design style with its signature Masterpiece™ and Professional Series wall ovens. These high-performance appliances are re-vamped with sophisticated features such as the Speed Convection mode, which reduces cooking time by up to 30% and eliminates the need for preheating, and the exclusive and industry best lightning fast preheat that takes less than seven minutes to reach 325 degrees Fahrenheit in the True Convection mode.

The sophisticated Masterpiece Series ovens combine a chiseled, contemporary design with the ease and flexibility desired by even the most discerning of consumers. The easy-to-use touch controls operate 16 different modes, while the EasyCook™ function utilizes 20 pre-programmed recipes to assist with convection cooking. Consumers can also save their four most used recipes for convenient access. In addition, the optional CookSmart® technology remains available, which combines microwave and convection cooking to reduce cooking time by up to 50% for the on-the-go cook.

Professional Series ovens offer consumers the true look and feel of restaurant-style cooking, with an elegant chronometer and stainless steel knobs. Exclusive features include a commercial-quality, dishwasher-safe rotisserie that can handle up to a 12 pound turkey and other large meats, and the 5,000 watt Max Broil™ element that provides the most powerful broiling capability in the industry.

Professional Series Ranges

A highlight in Thermador’s new full-line offering is the luxurious redefined look of the brand’s high-powered 27” depth Pro Grand® and 24” counter-depth

| continued on page 24 |

Thermador®

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Thermador 'Cooking in Style' | *continued from page 22* |

Pro Harmony™ Professional Series Ranges. Infused with an angular profile that blends seamlessly into the control panel, a robust door handle and stylish stainless steel knobs, the Professional Series Ranges and cooktops continue to offer design-conscious consumers the ultimate in luxury cooking and lifestyle convenience. Flawlessly combining elegant design with superior functionality, all Professional Series Ranges feature the legendary Star® Burner, a feature available exclusively on Thermador appliances. Perfect for custom kitchen remodels, the sleek Pro Grand Ranges have an oven that harnesses the power of convection cooking, developed in the brand's signature wall ovens, in order to provide superbly balanced temperatures for faster and more even cooking results. Flawlessly combining form and function, the Pro Grand's new look features an exclusive control panel with a signature temperature indicator that combines a bold badge plate and striking control panel graphics.

Pro Harmony Ranges, which also feature powerful convection cooking capabilities, express the bold new Thermador aesthetic with their Truly Flush Mounted™ design. This ultimately allows for seamless coordination with 24" cabinets, granting consumers the freedom to let style, rather than necessity, guide kitchen remodels. Other exceptional features of Pro Harmony include a high-quality structured frame that effectively contains heat, resulting in an exterior that is cooler to the touch, and a market-leading two hour self-clean cycle. Beginning in November, Thermador will offer a stunning 48" dual-fuel Pro Harmony Range that offers an exclusive two-hour rapid self-clean cycle—the fastest on the market—that includes the actual cool down period, allowing you to open the oven door immediately after completion.

Silver-Mirrored Induction Cooktops

Rounding out Thermador's bold new look is the dazzling line of silver-mirrored induction cooktops. These sterling cooktops combine Thermador's signature induction capabilities with an elegant, reflective silver-mirrored finish—the perfect compliment to a cutting-edge kitchen.

In addition to its sophisticated appearance, this new line of cooktops now offers a comprehensive, industry-leading array of safety features. Impressive new safety elements include an anti-overflow system that sounds an alarm and shuts off the unit if liquids boil over; an automatic stop system that turns off elements if controls are left untouched for extended periods of time; metal kitchen utensil detection if one is left on the cooktop and a cookware sensor alert if no pan is placed on an element or if it is not made of suitable material; and a child lock that helps prevent unintended use. In addition, the newly designed line boasts both 30" and 36" full induction models, as well as offers an easy-to-use touch control that accurately maintains up to 17 total levels of power.

Chimney-Style Drawer Hood

Thermador's ingenious new Drawer Hood takes the brand's high performance a step further. This wall hood is distinguished by a squared canopy that smoothly slides out and extends up to an extra 12 inches, for 45% more coverage of the cooking area. This doubling of the filter area ensures maximum and efficient extraction of odors and grease at up to 600 CFM (cubic feet of evacuated air per minute). It also gives consumers greater flexibility and control over their ventilation needs. Available in a 36" size—which perfectly complements the brand's powerful cooktops and ranges—Thermador's new Drawer Hood features a touch control panel that is easily engaged with a simple push of the button. **RO**



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18", 24" Wine cooler

Career Management Survey Points To Retail Industry's Efforts To Reduce Store Manager Turnover

COURTESY OF CAREER MANAGEMENT

(EAST BRUNSWICK, N.J. - November 12)—Findings from a recent survey of human resources executives at retail companies point to the industry's accelerated efforts to reduce turnover in their store management ranks, according to Career Management, the retail executive recruiting firm which conducted the study. The survey covered a range of compensation and benefits issues for store managers across all retail channels, with the participating companies collectively operating over 12,000 locations throughout the United States. "The industry's moves to make store management positions more appealing was underscored by the fact that over 80% of the companies surveyed indicated that their managers now average under 50 hours per week," noted Lloyd Lippman, CEO of Career Management and an adjunct professor of Retail Leadership Skills at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. "Not too long ago, most managers we were placing typically worked at least 55 to 60 hours per week." More specifically, store managers at 27% of the companies surveyed worked up to 44 hours per week and 54% put in 45 to 50 hours. Managers at another 17% of the companies averaged 51 to 59 hours per week, while just 2% averaged 60 hours-plus. The survey also found that store managers were eligible for performance bonuses at an overwhelming 92% of surveyed companies. Among those companies offering bonuses, 41% provided bonuses of up to 9.99% of the manager's base salary, 35% were in the range of 10% to 19.9% of base salary, 16% were in the range of 20% to 29.9%, 4% were in the 30% to 39.9% range, and another 4% offered bonuses in excess of 40% of base pay. Those bonuses were paid on top of salaries that, for the most part, averaged under \$60,000. Measured across all store volume categories, nearly 60% of the responding chains reported that average salaries for store managers (excluding bonuses and other compensation) were less than \$60,000, with 17% paying under \$40,000, 31% in the \$40,000 to \$49,999 range, and 11% in the \$50,000 to \$59,999 range. Salaries averaged in the \$60,000 to \$69,999 range at another 17% of the companies, while 10% were in the \$70,000 to \$79,999 range, another 10% were in the \$80,000 to \$99,999 range, and 4% reported average base salaries in excess of \$100,000.

Breaking the salaries down by chains' average store volume:

- In the under \$1 million category: 60% of store managers earned under \$40,000, 30% earned from \$50,000 - \$59,999, and 10% earned from \$60,000 to \$69,999.
- In the \$1 million to \$2.99 million category: 6% earned under \$40,000, 69% earned from \$40,000 to \$49,999, 19% earned from \$60,000 to \$69,999, and 6% earned from \$80,000 to \$89,999.
- In the \$3 million to \$5.99 million category: 12.5% earned under \$40,000, 25% earned from \$40,000 to \$49,900, 37.5% earned from \$50,000 to \$59,999, 12.5% earned from \$60,000 to \$69,999, and 12.5% earned from \$80,000 to \$89,999.
- In the \$6.0 million to \$9.99 million category: 11% earned under \$40,000, 11% earned from \$50,000 to \$59,999, 45% earned from \$60,000 to \$69,999, 11% earned from \$70,000 to \$79,999, and 22% earned from \$80,000 to \$89,999.
- In the \$10.0 million-plus category: 11% earned from \$50,000 to \$59,999, 11% earned from \$60,000 to \$69,999, 45% earned from \$70,000 to \$79,999, 11% earned from \$80,000 to \$99,999, and 22% exceeded \$100,000.

"Although our experience has shown that base salaries for store managers have been on the rise, one could still argue that compensation is not commensurate with leadership positions at other businesses generating the level of annual revenues produced by stores," Lippman noted. "Retailers have sought to shake their longstanding reputation as 'mediocre payers' by offering considerable bonuses tied to store sales, profits, shrinkage and other metrics, along with a variety of other benefits." Indeed, responding companies provided liberal employee discount programs for store managers, with 29% offering discounts in excess of 40%, 27% giving discounts in the 30% to 39.9% range, 25% in the 20% to 29.9% range, and the smallest group, 19%, offering discounts up to 20%. Moreover, a full 96% of the companies surveyed offer 401k plans for store managers. Among those providing plans, the largest group, 45%, will match employee contributions in excess of 3%, while 21% will match up to 1%, another 16% will match up to 2%, and 18% will match up to 3%. In terms of health benefits, the survey found that the vast majority of companies require managers to contribute to their policy premiums. Excluding costs for additional family members, only 8% of the companies cover the full premium for their store managers, while 21% require a contribution of up to 9.9% of the premium cost, 27% were in the 10% to 19.9% range, another 27% were in the 20% to 29.9% range, 13% were in the 30% to 49.9% range, and just 4% required managers to pay more than 50% of their individual premium. | *continued on page 36* |

New Best by Broan® Range Hood Offers High Performance in a Compact Profile

HARTFORD, WIS., NOVEMBER 27, 2007—The new UP27 professional-style range hood, the newest addition to the Best by Broan® line of kitchen ventilation products, offers contemporary style and the high performance of larger professional-style models in a compact, under-cabinet profile, according to Brian Wellnitz, marketing manager – kitchen ventilation. “The UP27 sets itself apart from the typical range hood with its stylish combination of form and material,” says Wellnitz. “Excellent for retrofit applications, the UP27 features smooth, contemporary lines with a sleek 10-inch profile. Designed for flexibility and easy installation, the UP27 is available in internal and external blower versions.” Accented by seamless welded construction of brushed 304 stainless steel, the UP27 provides a unique and lasting statement in any kitchen, says Wellnitz. There are several blower options for the UP27, all of which are certified by the Home Ventilating Institute (HVI) to perform at the stated

CFM level. The UP27I features a powerful 700 CFM internal blower. Flexible design allows the blower to exhaust through the top or back of the hood for either horizontal or vertical duct applications. For customers who want the ultimate in quiet and power, the UP27E allows the choice of four in-line and four external blower options up to 1500 CFM. The UP27 series includes superior Evolution™ baffle filters, which combine the performance of baffle filters with the efficiency of mesh for the ultimate in filtration. As with all Best by Broan range hoods, this series offers the exclusive Heat Sentry™ system, which automatically detects excessive heat and turns the blower to a higher speed. The UP27 also features concealed, adjustable speed and lighting controls that remember the last setting used, making operation simple and easy. The UP27 is available in 30-inch, 36-inch, 42-inch and 48-inch widths and is 22 inches deep. A non-duct recirculation kit is available for use with internal blower models. **RO**

Almo Continues To Expand Specialty Appliance Division— Brad Van Lenten Joins Almo Corporation as Regional Sales Manager

PHILADELPHIA, PA, NOVEMBER 15, 2007—Almo corporation has named Brad Van Lenten, regional sales manager for the company’s specialty appliance division. In this position, Brad will direct the sales initiatives in the northeast and mid-atlantic regions for specialty appliances, reporting to Larry Feldman, senior vice president of sales. “Brad brings to Almo specialty a wealth of experience in the high-end appliance market,” said Larry Feldman, Almo senior vice president of sales. “Brad brings to Almo extensive experience in designer appliance retailing. Everyone at Almo is happy to have him on board.” Brad brings more than 12 years of industry experience to his role at Almo. Most recently, he managed Home Depot’s expo design centers in six northern states. Prior to serving as regional manager for Home Depot’s high-end designer stores, Brad had a long, successful career with Home Depot holding positions as store manager, store planner, buyer/merchandiser and district sales manager. A graduate of Lehigh University, where he played football, Brad holds a Bachelor of Science degree in marketing.

He lives in New Jersey with his wife and child.

About Almo corporation

Almo corporation is the nation’s leading independent distributor of major appliances and consumer electronics. Known for its Rapid Ship services and exceptional customer service, Almo distributes the industries top brand names. Almo’s comprehensive fulfillment & ecommerce division provides drop-shipping services, daily inventory updates, EDI capability, customized packing slips and, customized labels along with access to our extensive inventory. Same-day shipping and next-day delivery enables our customers to provide timely deliveries to their customers. Founded in 1946, Almo is headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and operates 11 regional distribution facilities with over 1 million square feet of warehousing throughout the United States. More information on Almo is available by contacting the company directly or at Almo’s web site located at www.Almo.com. **RO**

Dacor Reveals Design Contest Winner

Chicago Area Designer Helps Remodels Dacor Showroom and Culinary Center

(SCHAUMBURG, IL - November 2007)—Dacor®, a leader in luxury kitchen appliance design, manufacturing and distribution announced Lisa McCauley of McCauley Design, Inc. in Barrington, Illinois, as the grand prize winner of the Dacor Showroom Design Contest. The competition, which ran from January 1, 2007 through March 15, 2007, was in search of a professional kitchen designer to create the most innovative and visually appealing concept for the Dacor Showroom and Culinary Center in the Greater Chicago area. McCauley, who was notified about the honor in April, had the opportunity to see her design concept come to life in a premier vignette of the Dacor Showroom when the remodeled space was unveiled in October. As part of the grand prize, McCauley also received an all-expense paid trip for two to the 2007 Kitchen & Bath Industry Show in Las Vegas. "It was exciting to see how these talented designers envisioned our showroom. We reviewed so many exceptional designs and it was a challenge to select only one winner," said Marcia Ianno, Showroom Manager. "Dacor is heavily invested in the designer and specifier community and we wanted to provide them with a platform to showcase their talent for everyone to see – so they can be recognized by their peers as well as their current and future clients." The contest was open to local National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA) members and professional kitchen designers in the Chicago area. Designers were invited to submit drawings of their showroom concepts, showcasing Dacor appliances, along with estimated costs and a punch list of materials required. Entries were evaluated based on creativity, originality, visual appeal and integration into the overall flow of the showroom. "The project was loads of fun for my entire team, it felt like we were in design school once again," said McCauley. "It was, however, a bit of a challenge to design the vignette. We had to create a space that included three different kitchen styles that offered a bit of eye candy to properly showcase the Dacor products." McCauley's brilliant design was selected among several dozens of entries by a panel of industry and marketing professionals and will feature a combination of wall ovens, warming drawers, cooktops, dishwashers, ventilation hoods and microwaves from the Dacor Epicure® Millennia® and Preference® Collections. "Dacor appliances offer consumers the perfect balance of style and performance, with an emphasis on developing technology that makes life in the kitchen easier for the home chef," continued McCauley. "The Millennia Discovery Wall Ovens have uncomplicated programming that manages most of the work for today's busy consumer with simple horizontal and vertical lines that are very soothing." The display also features exclusive tile designs from the McCauley Design, Inc., countertops from Euro Marble & Granite and with assistance from Pat Kusler for installation. The Dacor Showroom and Culinary Center is located at 2330 Hammond Drive, Suite A in Schaumburg, Illinois. **RO**



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NARDA and CEA Release the Cost of Doing Business Report

The North American Retail Dealers Association (NARDA) and The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA®) have jointly conducted and released the “Cost of Doing Business” study with the Professional Audio/Video Retailers Association (PARA, a division of CEA). The study was conducted among a sample of U.S. appliance dealers, consumer electronics dealers, service dealers, and dealers with mixed sales. The research focused on benchmarking key income statement and balance sheet metrics. The results provide a clear picture of dealer profitability, liquidity, operations management, and balance sheet management. The Cost of Doing Business Study provides comparative information that dealers can use to assess the financial health of their business, identify strengths and areas that need improvement, and develop strategies for growth. This important business management tool can benefit dealers across several industries.

The “Cost of Doing Business Report” is available free of charge to all those who participated in the survey. The Report is available to NARDA members for free and to nonmembers for \$299. To order the Report, contact NARDA at 800.621.0298 or www.narda.com

NARDA and Service USA Announce 2008 Service & Retail Convention (SRC) Program—Geek Squad Founder Richard Stephens to Keynote

NARDA/Service USA's, 2008 Service and Retail Convention (SRC) will be held Sunday, March 30 - Wednesday, April 2 at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas.

Geek Squad Founder & Chief Inspector, Richard Stephens will be the opening Keynote Speaker. The SRC will offer attendees over 80 educational sessions and the broadest range of courses being offered at any industry event. Sessions will cover Retail Management, Service Management, Technical Training and Personal Development skills.

SRC program attendees include independent retailers, service business operators and technicians. A mini-trade show will run in conjunction with event and will feature more than 50 exhibitors. According to ServicePower CEO, Chris Smith, “We enjoy participating in SRC. It is a great opportunity for us to gain valuable feedback on our product as well as to show appreciation to the retailers and service providers who are end-users. I believe the combination of NARDA and Service USA is progressive thinking and we will continue to support it”.

Confirmed Sponsors to date include:

Platinum: Direct Energy

Gold: Service Power

Silver: Nationwide Marketing Group, Sub Zero Wolf

Bronze: Electrolux

Program and hotel registration can be made online at www.src08.org. For more information contact NARDA at 847.375.4713

NARDA/Service USA Monitor Potential California Climate Change Regulations

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) released its revised Early Action Plan last month which includes consideration of refrigerant and foam recovery as possible regulatory means to address climate change. This coupled with the announcement this week that Sears has joined EPA's Responsible Appliance Disposal Program (RAD) brings the issue of end of life treatment of refrigerators and freezers, and its cost, much closer to home. NARDA/Service USA in partnership with the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM) is in the process of developing a proposed comprehensive strategy to address the many facets of the Climate Change issue and will be outlining its elements in the coming weeks. In the interim, AHAM has mobilized efforts to gather more information and evaluate: the science behind foam in landfills; disposal practices for refrigerant and foam; and state and federal regulatory efforts.

NARDA and APDA Partner, Offer Member List Online

For contact information and a list of members of the Appliance Parts Distributors Association (APDA), visit www.apda.com. The Appliance Parts Distributors Association (APDA) is an association of independent businesses that aspire to provide the highest level of quality, service, support and information to its customers and suppliers. The APDA is a partner of NARDA and co-located at NARDA's headquarters.

NARDA Scholarship Foundation Awards Deadline—December 31, 2007

The NARDA Scholarship Trust Fund was established in 1989. The fund was initiated by the Board of Directors in honor of Ezra “Zeke” Landres, who contributed so much of his energy for dealer education. | *continued on page 34* |

The Retail Observer

The Monthly News Magazine With Personality

OPPORTUNITIES 2008

Classified section

Find an employee, hire a distributor, sell B-stock, give a shout out, or propose marriage. We will custom tailor your ad for our readers. Let us know how many words and the frequency you want the ad to run and we'll give you a custom quote. Send an e-mail to moe@retailobserver.com. Deadline for ads is the 10th of the month previous to the edition.

Highlight your event

We know what you did last summer; now tell us what you're going to do this next year. Send an e-mail to info@retailobserver.com and let us know what kind of event you've had or are having at your showroom, factory or country club. We will be glad to discuss what information we would need to create a nicely highlighted follow-up to your event. Deadline for editorial is the 10th of the month previous to the edition.

Give us your view

Did you ever want the opportunity to be a journalist? Well, this isn't it, but we would like to hear what you have to say anyway. Send us your comments on industry related topics and we will take a look at them. We will compile the ones that won't cause political unrest or global crisis and set them in this new section. Those unused will be filed for a rainy day. Send an e-mail to info@retailobserver.com. Maximum content of 300 words. Deadline for editorial is the 10th of the month previous to the edition.

Calendar section

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.

Kieffer's Celebrates 90th Anniversary

BY JACE KIEFFER

In November 2007, Kieffer's Appliances celebrated 90 years in business. To celebrate this feat, on November 8th, Kieffer's had a rededication of their Lansdale showroom. Owner John Kieffer and his twenty employees were joined by manufacturers, builders, kitchen & bath dealers, and family for hors d'oeuvres and refreshments. Over the past two years Kieffer's Appliances has remodeled their 12,000 sq. ft. showroom; the apex coming with the installation of the 1,300 sq. ft. Subzero-Wolf Living Kitchen. The Living Kitchen display features the full line of Subzero-Wolf products in exquisite kitchen settings. The Kieffer's namesake traces back four generations to the first storefront in North Philadelphia.

In early November 1917, John E. Kieffer opened the doors at 1123 Girard Avenue in Philadelphia, selling automobile tires and blocks of ice. In the late 1920's, the business began selling a few appliances: the RCA and Philco Battery Crystal Radio sets, the Grono & Crosley refrigerator, and the Royal electric vacuum cleaner. These few appliances, considered innovations at the time, were the predecessor of what was to become the standard Kieffer's concept – cutting edge merchandise at the best prices. Over the years, Kieffer's product offering has evolved from tires to pro-style appliances but their mission has not wavered; to bring professional sales support and a broad product selection to an industry dominated by large, impersonal retail chains.

Family owned and operated since 1917, the 4th generation of the Kieffer family is now involved in the business. Kieffer's opened their Lansdale location in 1963 and ever since has been active in the Lansdale community; from hosting clam bakes and having tent sales to bringing in truckloads of watermelons for boy scout's fundraisers. The years of support and patronage from the community has been tremendous and has helped keep Kieffer's Appliances a contender in today's competitive economy. For more about Kieffer's Appliances visit www.kieffers.com 



John E. Kieffer & Sons, Philadelphia, 1964



Kieffer's, Lansdale, 2007



Ribbon cutting ceremony for the rededication of the Lansdale showroom



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PRESS RELEASE

FABER Introduces New Products in 2008

Coming soon, exciting new ventilation products from Faber rangehoods. Faber - The Premier Kitchen Ventilation Company for over 50 years, whose Italian crafted products have a flair for design and providing excellent value, will add several hoods to their current line in the first quarter of 2008. The Inca Smart insert hood will have a product extension to the Inca Smart SS, which features a stainless steel bottom and stainless covered grease filters. Also, the designer Stilo wall hood will have 2 new dimensions of 30" and 48". The Dama Isola now has a wall-mounted counterpart, the Dama wall hood will be available in 30" and 36" Look for more products soon including an innovative integrated full cabinet length rangehood, a new glass slide-out hood and a several new canopy hoods coming soon! **RO**



Faber Stilo



Faber Dama Isola



Faber Inca Smart insert hood

NARDA News | *continued from page 30* |

The program awards scholarships to NARDA members pursuing higher education in business.

Scholarships of a maximum of \$3,000 will be awarded, and no more than \$1,500 per semester. Students already enrolled in an accredited college are eligible to apply, and the Scholarship can be used for graduate as well as undergraduate course study in the field of Business.

NARDA application forms, transcripts and required references must be received no later than December 31, 2007. For more information visit www.narda.com or call 847.375.4813. **RO**

Whirlpool Corporation Congratulates Western Appliance

Western Appliance is the only appliance store in the
United States to earn two very prestigious
Energy Star awards for 2007:
The U.S. Department of Energy Award and
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Award

*From the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)
to Jeff Moir, Vice President and
General Manager of Western Appliance*

2007 Michael C. Thompson Award

Created in the Memory of Whirlpool's Mike Thompson
given to recognize *Visionary Leaders* of
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The only award of this type given this year by the D.O.E. in the entire United States

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Western Appliance

*10 stores including Dublin, Fremont, San Leandro, Mountain View,
Santa Cruz, Salinas, Gilroy, and three stores in San Jose.*

TOGETHER WE CAN ALL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Long Live the Queen

Kenwood has played its part in honoring the royal wedding anniversary of the Queen of England with the creation of a very special statue. To help celebrate the Queen's 60-year marriage to the Duke of Edinburgh the small electrical company commissioned sculptor Ptolemy Elrington to build a statue of Her Majesty made entirely from Kenwood parts. The 8ft figure was unveiled in London but will have its home at Kenwood's Havant, Hampshire factory. Kenwood is also marking a 60-year milestone this year, as the company was founded by Kenneth Wood in 1947. Since then it has sold over 15 million of its iconic Kenwood Chefs and, appropriately enough, the brand has even found its way into the kitchens at Buckingham Palace. **RO**



Career Management

| continued from page 26 |

Addressing the issues of compensatory time off and vacations, the survey found that 38% of responding companies offer comp time to store managers who exceed their allotted hours for a week. The typical vacation policy for store managers at responding companies was two weeks after one year, three weeks after five years and four weeks after 10 years of service.

About Career Management

Founded in 1978, Career Management specializes in executive recruitment for all segments of the retail, catalog and e-commerce industries. With offices in East Brunswick, N.J. and New York City, the firm assists a wide variety of clients across the country, fulfilling talent needs at many levels, ranging from corporate senior management to field and store management. All associates at the firm have prior hands-on experience in the retail industry. For more information, visit www.careers4retail.com **RO**

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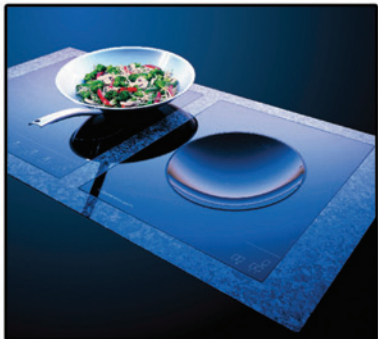

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Fagor America Expands North American Appliance



Reach With Two New Distribution Partnerships

(LYNDHURST, NJ)—Fagor America Inc., the worldwide leader in built-in induction cooktops, today announced its partnership with two new distributors within North America: Signature Marketing (Northeast USA) and Excel Distribution (West & Southwest USA)

Fagor America, headquartered in Lyndhurst NJ specializes in high performance eco-friendly appliances. As a commitment to environmental preservation, Fagor designs all of their products using an eco-friendly manufacturing process and recycled packaging materials. Beyond environmentally sound manufacturing, many appliances in the line have been awarded an Energy Star rating for their moderate consumption of natural resources. “Distributors have begun to recognize Fagor as a brand that adds value to their product offering, this is because consumers know that they are unsurpassed for their commitment to performance, energy savings and overall value,” said Sara De La Hera, Vice President of Sales & Marketing for Fagor America. “In addition, these agreements strengthen the distribution channel Fagor uses to support our dealers and value added resellers, complementing our overall customer service offering.”

Excel Distributing has over 25 years experience cultivating relationships with the most selective brands along with their discerning customers. Excel provides marketing, sales and distribution of luxury appliances throughout the West and Southwest United States. They strive to provide dealership customers with the expected experience when purchasing a specialty, high-end appliance.

Excel Distribution services the following states:

CA, NV, UT, AZ, CO, NM

Phone: 1.888.473.9235 Website: www.exceldist.com

Signature Marketing is a distributor of specialty domestic appliances. Customers are able to take advantage of a convenient next-day quick ship program from their extensive inventory. They have an in house service department dedicated to installation, maintenance and parts to ensure complete customer satisfaction.

Signature Marketing services the following states:

ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD

Phone: 1.800.385.8886

Website: www.signaturegrouppltd.net

Fagor America, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Fagor Electrodomesticos. Based in Spain, Fagor is the worldwide leader of built-in induction cooktops manufacturing, the leading appliance manufacturer in both Spain and France and fifth largest appliance manufacturer overall in Europe. 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. For more information, please visit the Fagor America website at www.fagoramerica.com or call toll free at 1.800.207.0806.



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COMING EVENTS

CALENDAR 2007-2008

DECEMBER 2007

- 6 NKBA Columbia River Chapter- Holiday Party-Pental Granite, Portland, OR
- 11 NKBA Phoenix Arizona Chapter-Central Arizona Supply, Scottsdale AZ (Holiday Party)
- 12 NARI San Jose Chapter- META Awards, Doubletree, San Jose, CA

JANUARY 2008

- 7-10 CEA-International Consumer Electronics Show (CES), Sands Expo, Las Vegas, NV

FEBRUARY 2008

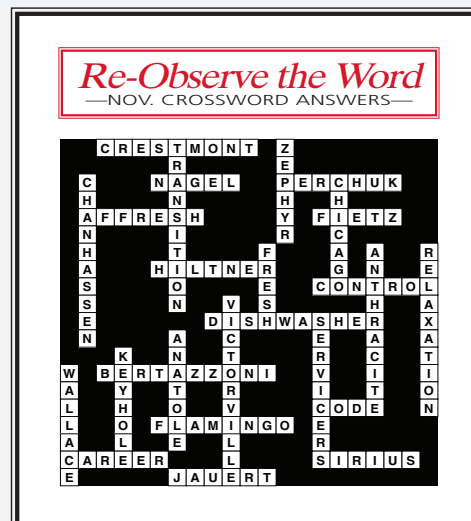
- 13-16 International Builders Show- Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL

MARCH 2008

- 2-5 Nationwide Primetime Spring-Hilton Anatole, Dallas, TX
- 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

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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.



COMING EVENTS

CALENDAR 2007-2008

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



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IMPORTANT: please specify desired territory in your cover letter.

Adios – Arrivederci – and Goodbye

By Lee Boucher



This is my final editorial for the *Retail Observer*, the best-read major appliance trade journal in the world. Am I prejudiced? Of course! Yes, I am old, sentimental, emotional, and right now I'm serious.

I joined Chuck Edmonds, founder of the *Retail Observer*, as the editor, associate, and his close friend, four months after the first issue was published.. That was 17 years ago. He rescued me from retirement and I'll be forever grateful. It has been an exciting adventure. Of course the most important thing has been my association with all of you active in our innovative major appliance industry.

My resume will be brief, but I thought you might like to know where I got started in the appliance business and how long it's been. First I started as manager of my uncle's appliance and TV store in East Pasadena, CA in 1948. After four years I joined Gas Appliances, the distributor of Servel gas refrigerators in Southern California. Servel went out of business in 1956 and I moved my family to Lake Oswego, near Portland, OR and was hired by GE Supply as a Sales Counselor as we were called then. That job was like shooting fish in a barrel, as the saying goes. First, I had a demand line of appliances to sell, second, I could offer free flooring, third, I had no limit on the amount of advertising I could give to a prospective new account and, finally, business in 1956 was good. I was promoted to merchandising manager for the branch. During this period I was offered two additional promotions: one to be the sales trainer for the region, and second, to be the branch manager in Spokane, WA. By that time I had a nice home in Lake Oswego with a wife and three sons. It is well known in our industry that if you turn down two promotions you'll never get a third one.

With that in mind I decided to start my own appliance retail store. I opened it on Friday the 13th in 1960 in Menlo Park, CA. I was a one-man band. Many of you can relate. I bought, I sold, I swept the front sidewalk, I delivered and installed, I kept the books (but not very well) and I was open six days a week. I must have been crazy! The gossipy Zenith dealer down the street gave me six months before going out of business. Two years later I took in a partner, Bud Anderson, the Packard Bell rep, and

we've been partners ever since. In 1989 I sold our three stores because then I was 67 years old and none of my sons wanted to carry on.

Since my age is in the low 80's, barely, I know just about everyone in the major appliance business west of the Mississippi River from top to bottom. I get my kicks from seeing independent distributors and dealers become really successful. Below are a few examples:

Zephyr Ventilation held an Open House at a hotel in San Francisco ten years ago. Alex Siow and Jack Stemmy had three low-end range hoods to present: low, medium and high 30 and 36 inch hoods. Recently Zephyr was sold to Broan for a zillion dollars!

Purcell Murray started its distributor ship with one line — Litton. Today it is the biggest distributor of BHS products and other brands in the U.S.

Bob Riggs, now CEO and President of Sub-Zero/Wolf in California and Hawaii, began distributing Jenn-Air products in northern California. He acquired Sub-Zero

and gave up Jenn-Air (smartest move he ever made because Maytag bought it later and went direct) and now he is the biggest distributor of Sub-Zero/Wolf appliances.

I have witnessed many independent appliance retailers reading the writing on the wall that have gone after the indoor and outdoor kitchen business. They are prosperous and they deserve to be for taking the plunge.

The NKBA chapter meetings, the Brand Source and Nationwide Primetime Conventions and the Kitchen and Bath Industry Shows have always been the highlights of my career. Those are the times that I could meet my friends and listen to the latest gossip about what whom is doing to whom and when will it happen. Very few of us leave this major appliance industry. It is contagious.

Finally, I want to thank all of you, manufacturers, distributor and dealers for being so cooperative with me for all these years. A special thanks to our reporters for their erudite editorial contributions and photography. Human relationships are far more important to me than what your gross sales volume is. I have interviewed over 120 independent appliance dealers including mom and pop stores and stores that do over \$100,000,000 yearly in gross sales. No two are alike. You are all great! I will miss all of you. **RO**

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A Holiday View

BY CHUCK EDMONDS



First of all, may I wish you and your business and your families a most joyous Christmas and Happy New Year.

Time certainly flies and I am now happily retired and today, at my athletic club, a member asked me, "Now that you are retired are you meeting the goals and objectives you established for your retirement?" I sadly responded, "A few little ones but the big ones keep eluding me. I have them written down and every so often I read them again and then I say to myself, tomorrow we get to work on project number one." Project number one is to transfer almost 500 old 33 records to a DVD recorder. I have not the foggiest idea of how to do this but I will some day soon go down to Fry's Electronics and ask some responsible expert (if they have any) how to do this. There is a great song, from the 30's, called "One of these days." That's my new theme song. Ruth says it better: "Put off until tomorrow what you aren't doing today!"

The Economy Hasn't Turned Down

Despite the recent downward spiral of the stock market the economy is still robust and sharp shocks in any one sector isn't creating chaos. The housing market is in deep trouble but it isn't creating severe problems to the economy. A sharp downturn or down trend in one sector of the economy is not leading to recession or creating overall problems in the market. The housing market is creating lots of problems but these problems are not currently affecting the economy as a whole. Flexible financial markets are absorbing the impact. As long as employment remains up and does not drastically dip the housing crisis is not a crisis but a subprime issue. We are building less houses than in previous years. It will take many long months for the housing market to regain substantial growth in many geographical areas.

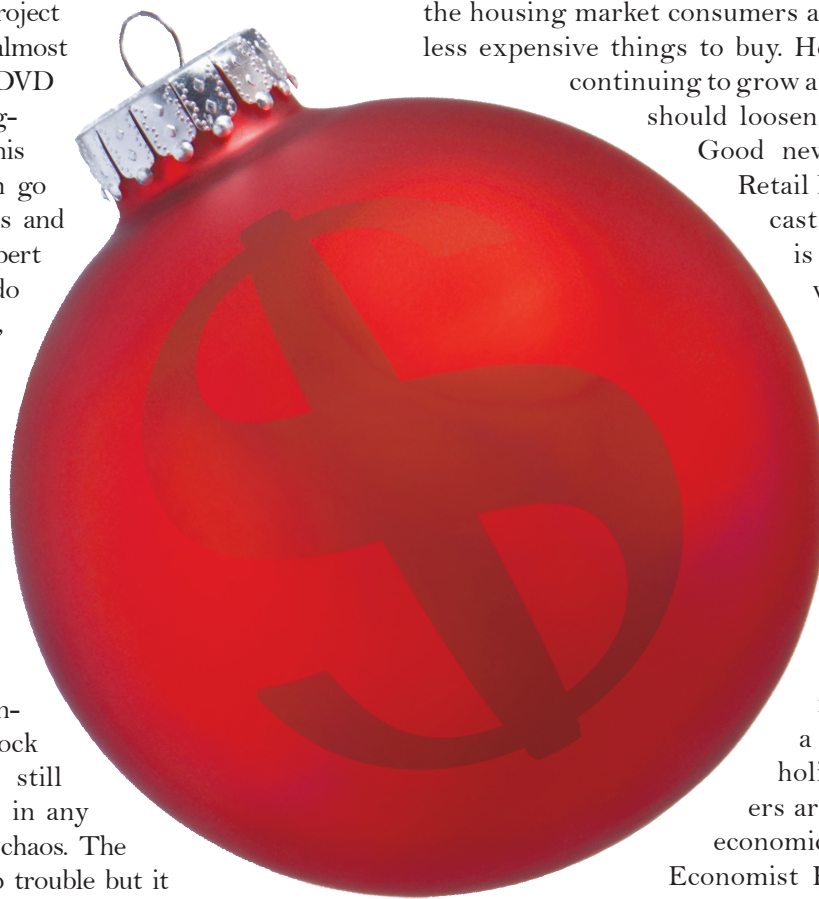
We Are Spending Less!

The top 20% of the households are still spending and buying and the economical problems are not affecting them. The 50 or 60% of the average American families are getting along OK although they are spending less. The bottom 20% is in deep trouble and many of them are living close to the poverty line or below that line. American consumers for the past several years have been trading up- buying luxuries they ordinarily wouldn't afford. Now dismal economical news coupled with the high cost of gas and problems with credit and the housing market consumers are seeking smaller and less expensive things to buy. However, real income is continuing to grow and Christmas shopping should loosen up our purse strings.

Good news from the National Retail Federation. Their forecast for the holiday season is predicting that sales will rise 4% to \$474.5 billion. However, factory shipments of appliances are down from last year and will not gain this Christmas season. Increases in holiday sales will be mostly in the gift, clothes, and most important, electronics. Retailers are in for a somewhat challenging holiday season as consumers are faced with numerous economic obstacles, stated NRY

Economist Rosalind Wells. "With the weak housing market and current credit crunch, consumers will be forced to be more prudent with their holiday spending", she said. The 2007 holiday sales will fall below the ten year average of 4.8%. Inflation should not be a major problem. This is predicted on the expectation of prices increases remaining at the present level.

Despite the gloom and doom prophets the 3rd quarter of this year saw a strong 3.9% rise in real gross domestic product. The economy may see slower growth in the months ahead. **RO**



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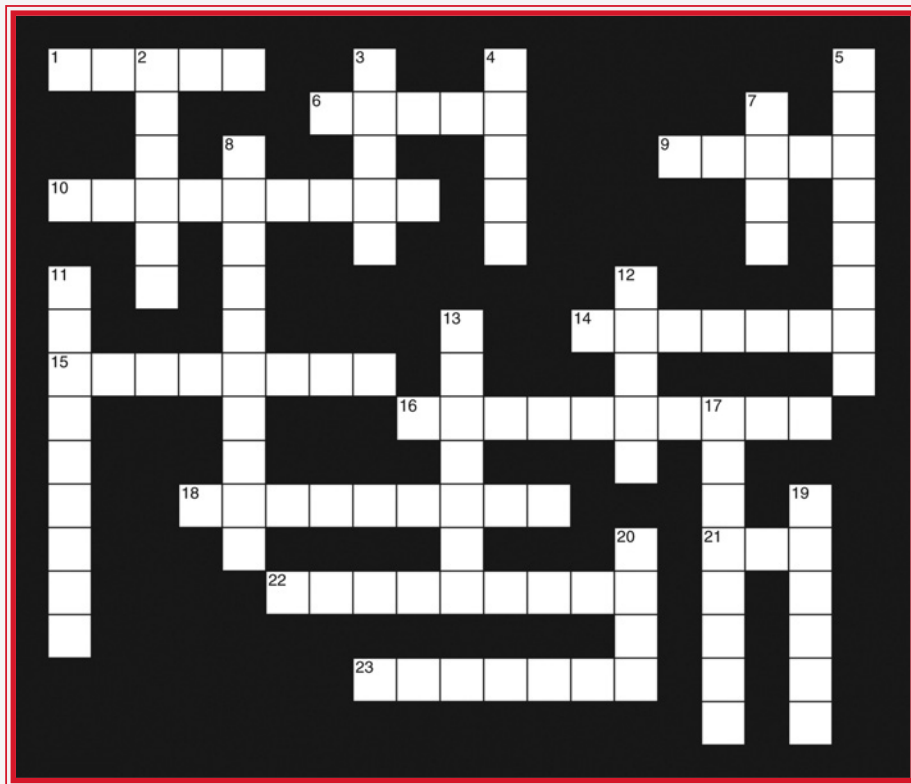
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Re-Observe the Word

—DECEMBER CROSSWORD—

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



ACROSS

1. BERTAZZONI IS A _____
GENERATION FAMILY OWNED COMPANY
6. _____ NEW YEAR
9. NEW LINE FOR PURCELL MURRAY
10. SILVER-MIRRORED _____ COOKTOP
14. CHUCK TO TRANSFER 500 _____
15. IN WHAT MONTH OF 1917 DID
KIEFFERS OPEN?
16. NARDA BRONZE SPONSOR
18. CAREER MANAGEMENT IS IN
EAST _____
21. BIS IS OWNED BY _____
22. MADE A TRIBUTE TO THE QUEEN
OUT OF PARTS
23. FISHER AND PAYKEL TO BUILD
DISHWASHER IN _____

DOWN

2. BLACK _____
3. _____ ELECTRODOMESTICOS
4. _____ MONDAY
5. BOSCH'S WASH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
7. THE NEW UP27 BY _____
8. DACOR'S REDESIGNED SHOWROOM
IS IN _____
11. THIS BRAD JOINED ALMO
12. _____ CHRISTMAS
13. BROAN BOUGHT ZEPHYR FOR
A _____ DOLLARS
17. MARC PEREZ, VICE PRESIDENT OF

19. DON AND _____ MARTIN
20. THE _____ SMART INSERT HOOD

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

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Test your power of observation

The online functionality of the crossword has been delayed, so starting with the 2008 issues of the *Retail Observer*, 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 in 2008 for the prize puzzle online at www.retailobserver.com. A test puzzle is available at <http://www.MyCrosswords.com/549/RetailObserver/Re-ObserveTheWordDecember2007.html>

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