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***gia* 2013-2014 - GLOBAL INNOVATION AWARD WINNERS FROM 22 COUNTRIES CELEBRATED AT THE INTERNATIONAL HOME + HOUSEWARES SHOW IN CHICAGO**

CHICAGO (January 8, 2014) – The International Home + Housewares Show and International Housewares Association (IHA), the global sponsors and organizers of the *gia* (Global Innovation Award) program, today announced the national *gia* winners of 2013-2014 – including 23 innovative and unique home and housewares retailers from 22 countries around the globe.

The IHA and International Home + Housewares Show created the *gia* program in 1999 to foster innovation and excellence in home and housewares retailing throughout the world. The competition is structured on a two-tier level, national and global, to honor independent and multiple location home and housewares retailers for excellence in several business categories:

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

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

The 2013-2014 national *gia* winners are:

Country	Company	Url
Argentina	Cook Inc.	www.cookinc.com.ar
Australia	TheSuperCool	www.thesupercool.com
Austria	K & Ö HOME	www.go-home.at
Brazil	Palato Casa	www.palato.com.br
Canada	Teatro Verde Cucina	www.teatroverde.com
Colombia	Oben Muebles S.A.	www.oben.com.co
Denmark	LERCHE design	www.lerchedesign.dk

Dominican Republic	Paragourmet	www.paragourmet.com
Eastern Europe	Potten & Pannen - Staněk	www.pottenpannen.cz
France	Merci	www.merci-merci.com
Germany	Estella KochLust	www.estella-kochlust.de
India	HomeStop	www.shoppersstop.com
Italy	Galleria Fiaba	
Japan	212K	www.212kitchenstore.com
Netherlands	Kookwinkel Bianca Bonte	www.biancabonte.nl
Poland	Villeroy&Boch	www.villeroy-boch.com
Russia	Dom Farfora	www.farformarket.ru
Switzerland	Pro Table St. Gallen	www.protable.ch
Turkey	Boyner	www.boyner.com.tr
UK	Lakeland	www.lakeland.co.uk
Uruguay	Motociclo Uruguay	www.motociclo.com.uy
USA	Rolling Pin Kitchen Emporium	www.rollingpinonline.com
USA – Internet/ Catalogue Retailers	MetroKitchen.com	www.metrokitchen.com

During the 2014 International Home + Housewares Show in March, the winners are honored at a festive awards dinner, where the 2013-2014 *gia* Global Honorees and the winner of the Martin M. Pegler Award for Excellence in Visual Merchandising will be announced. Other *gia* highlights at the International Home + Housewares Show include a *gia* showcase in the Hall of Global Innovation, in Lakeside Center Lobby, where visuals of the national *gia* winners' award-winning store design and branding ideas, examples of exquisite visual merchandising and innovative displays are on display. Banners for the honored retailers can be seen in the walkway that connects the Grand Concourse and the Lakeside Center.

gia is more than an awards program. Representing retailing excellence around the world, it is part of a larger education initiative that includes seminars by retail experts, columns in international housewares publications and educational sessions at events in sponsors' home countries. Part of *gia*'s educational offering, on March 17, *Martin M. Pegler*, together with the other *gia* Expert Jurors, will conduct a special session in the Innovation Theater of the 2014 International Home + Housewares Show, with topic *Creating the Store's Brand Identity*.

For more information about the gia (Global Innovation Award) program, the co-sponsors, or participating in 2014-2015, contact Piritta Törrö at piritta.torro@inspiredconnection.fi. Additional information on the gia program is also available online at www.housewares.org/gia.

For more information on the 2014 International Home + Housewares Show, taking place in Chicago on 15-18 of March, and to pre-register for an entrance badge, visit www.housewares.org.

To follow are short descriptions of the 2013-2014 national *gia* winners:

Argentina – Cook Inc.

www.cookinc.com.ar

Drawing from over 30 years of marketing experience, two-year-old retailer Cook Inc. has already become a landmark destination in Buenos Aires, charming the public with excellent care and a wide variety of kitchen products. The retailer is directed by Eduardo and Ezequiel Gazzotti, who in addition to being business partners, are father and son, providing a knowledgeable and innovative approach to their family business. Their personalized selection of innovative products is a key to their success.

In each of the retailer's three stores, customers can find everything for the kitchen from cookware and kitchen tools to ovens, stoves and grills. They sell key international brands and private label products. Cook Inc. has quickly become an established brand by truly reflecting the tastes, interests and passion of its founders.

Australia – TheSuperCool

www.thesupercool.com

TheSuperCool has established itself as a unique brand with innovative product and a cult following, which is even more impressive given its two-year-old lineage. Beginning as a mobile emporium to mimic the vintage peddlers of times gone by, TheSuperCool supports many emerging and established designers from around the globe and prides itself on creating interactive, constantly evolving in-store displays and experiences. With a flair for curating unique gift and homewares product, each visit to TheSuperCool is like unearthing a treasure. With a strong social media presence, two semi-permanent shops and an online store, the future looks bright for this independent brand.

Austria – K & Ö Home

www.go-home.at

Accountant Carl Kastner missed a train in Graz, Austria in 1883. During his stroll through the city, he discovered a tiny salesroom of about 20 m² (215 ft²) that offered a variety of products. From humble beginnings and after many successful years, this small business grew to become the largest and most important storehouse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. K & Ö Home was the first company within the empire to regulate working hours and holidays and to offer fixed pricing. Today, the complex in Graz consists of 10 buildings from six centuries, 40,000 m²

(430,000 ft²) of gross retail space and 700 underground parking spaces and welcomes more than four million visitors each year!

Brazil – Palato Casa

www.palato.com.br

Focused on distinguished service of the highest standard, Palato Casa turned 15 years old in 2013. This retailer is known for elegance and sophistication and stands out for its diverse selection of kitchen products, home textiles and furniture. Design, quality, exclusivity and expert care make Palato Casa a must-visit destination for those who cook at home or professionally, as well as for those looking for the perfect gift, renovating a home and especially for couples completing a wedding list full of the best gifts that the market offers.

Canada – Teatro Verde Cucina

www.teatroverde.com

Covering just over 185 m² (2,000 ft²), Teatro Verde Cucina is proof that beautiful things come in small packages. Chic and sophisticated, this upscale Toronto shopping center draws customers into the store with its stunning, inventive displays and clever lighting. This is the third Teatro Verde location, but it's the first foray into kitchenware for owners Shawn Gibson and Michael Pellegrino, who have opted to remove most packaging and let the products speak for themselves. Minimalism takes precedence, with modern dining accessories merchandised against a backdrop of neutral tones and natural wood. A sleek commercial kitchen draws shoppers to the rear of the store as they stroll past vintage decor accessories mixed with the latest high-tech housewares. With methodical planning and an obsession with detail, the owners have created a fashionable retail environment for foodies, exceptional in every way.

Colombia – Oben Muebles

www.oben.com.co

From origins in Palmira, Valle del Cauca, 25 years of inspiration have created an exciting retail environment that has a welcoming atmosphere and is full of life. To become one of the most important brands of furniture and décor in Colombia, Oben Muebles has been inspired by the people, the culture and the environment of the land. The high-quality creations are designed to evoke emotion within thousands of customers who visit any of the 11 large-format stores in Bogota, Cali, Pereira and Palmira. Oben Muebles is about the integration of materials and

designs with the latest trends to arouse a unique shopping experience, allowing the store's motto to ring true: OBEN is your home!

Denmark – LERCHE Design

www.lerchedesign.dk

LERCHE design was founded in 2002 by interior designer Mie Lerche Bach who, through her passion, wanted to create an inspiring and innovative lifestyle store combining furniture, interior decoration and design. The 250 m² (2,690 ft²) concept store is based on Scandinavian design with a clear international touch aiming to create a space where customers feel comfortable, inspired and well served in a relaxed atmosphere. In addition to the retail store, LERCHE design handles interior design solutions for B2B customers as well as private customers, and they are well known all over Denmark for their inspiring showroom, shop, website, newsletter and in-store events.

Dominican Republic – Paragourmet

www.paragourmet.com

When customers arrive at Paragourmet in Santo Domingo, they feel as if they are in another country. Many are simply surprised to find such a diverse product offering so close to home. That was the idea when its founder, Nabia Salcedo, opened the first small shop in 2002. For 12 years, housewives, cooking enthusiasts and chefs have visited Paragourmet to find kitchen tools, specialized equipment and a wide variety of ingredients needed to create their culinary dreams.

Today, the Paragourmet retail store has grown to 300 m² (3,230 ft²) and has positioned itself as a destination for culinary excellence, serving not only the Dominican Republic but Haiti as well. The larger space also features a demo kitchen where workshops are held by celebrity chefs to offer customers knowledge and modern cooking techniques.

Eastern Europe – Potten & Pannen – Staněk

www.pottenpannen.cz

The Potten & Pannen – Staněk stores are a perfect reflection of 26 leading specialized kitchenware producers that have been brought together to create one unique retail environment. The store is a place where different product categories, materials and styles are combined while still maintaining the individual identity of each brand. Store fixtures are simple, functional and versatile with a touch of hand-craftsmanship to create a warm and comfortable place for the

presentation of products. The retailer's mission is to delight customers with the best quality products, ambiance and great service.

France – Merci

www.merci-merci.com

Opened in March of 2009 in the trendy neighborhood of NoMa (Le Haut Marais) in Paris, Merci aims to bring together a very eclectic proposition of design and fashion as well as three restaurants and cafes. Every month, the central atrium is used as a stage for an exclusive exposition. With 40 percent of customers coming from outside of France, Merci has become a destination store that sets lifestyle trends. Going from casual to very exclusive and premium items, Merci welcomes a diverse spectrum of visitors, of all ages, styles and nationalities.

Germany - Estella KochLust

www.estella-kochlust.de

Estella KochLust's design-led cooking utensils and authentic Mediterranean gourmet food meet their customers' wishes in a unique way. The store delivers high-quality products and sales advice to the customer through countless tasting possibilities, live cooking events and through the much sought-after cooking evenings. Estella creates a special shopping experience through emotion, creatively designed product presentations and personal customer service. The quickly growing number of regular visitors and a high average customer expenditure show that the Estella concept caters to each customer's need.

India – Homestop

www.shoppersstop.com

HomeStop is a complete home solution chain offering design, style, convenience and value to the consumer. The retailer provides high-quality products through a deep product offering. HomeStop, the first of its kind of premium home concept store in India, is the destination to transform a dream house into a reality. Presently in 14 Indian cities, HomeStop offers a large range of home products to give their customers' residences the unique look and feel they've always wanted. From the kitchen to dining room, bathroom to bedroom, HomeStop has everything needed, making the retailer the premier destination within India for customers to find the most respected national and international brands under one roof.

Italy – Galleria Fiaba

From the beginnings in 1985, Galleria Fiaba has grown to become one of the most successful and revered stores in Italy. Born from Lucia and Salvatrice Rotondo's vision, the retail store is situated in the historic center of Vittoria. In 2011, a new sales space was created with 750 m² (8,072 ft²) being designed to showcase the most prestigious brands. The store's atmosphere is that of a modern art gallery, complete with seven window displays that feature the finest porcelain, crystal, silverware and gifts. The front of the store features a high, black polished wall on which expansive displays are showcased. The Rotondo family has been in control of the business for more than 28 years and continues to embrace Galleria Fiaba's "trend setter" reputation.

Japan – 212K

www.212kitchenstore.com

212 Kitchen Store was created to enhance a kitchen lifestyle, offering the promise of fine living. Their catch phrase—"bringing the world's most splendid restaurant to your dinner table"—attracts customers who want to create a wonderful home, where making and eating a meal becomes an enjoyable experience. The "212" reference—NYC's area code—helps to define the retailer's theme and attitude, latching onto New York's global food culture, where cooking has no borders. As you might expect, the culinary products and gourmet foods found at 212 Kitchen Store come from a variety of cultures and countries around the world.

Netherlands – Kookwinkel Bianca Bonte

www.biancabonte.nl

Bianca Bonte's kitchen store is a true gem, located in the furthestmost southwestern point of the Netherlands. In the spring of 2013, the entire store was remodeled and expanded. Using a unique concept, Bianca aims to develop a high profile amid growing competition. The new store is a stage that absolutely exceeds customers' expectations. The new interior, with noticeable links to the industrial infrastructure of the nearby ports of Antwerp and Flushing, features very trendy shipping container doors used for display, and a large, free-standing stove serves to stimulate customers' senses. All of this turned Bianca Bonte's kitchen store into a hot spot for lovers of culinary art, who come to Oostburg from near and far.

Poland – Villeroy & Boch

www.villeroy-boch.com

Villeroy & Boch is deeply rooted in European culture. And, as only such a great brand is capable of doing, it has managed to preserve its identity while moving with the times.

Tradition, quality and authenticity: These are the classic Villeroy & Boch attributes that give consumers support and guidance.

Innovative power, style and design: These are the values that inspire people and give them the freedom to design their homes according to their own individual taste.

The sales concept of Villeroy & Boch makes it possible to experience these attributes and values in the store. Products are presented in an authentic, powerfully designed, true-to-life composition in realistic settings, such as bathrooms, kitchens and dining areas. The brand uses this message to provide style guidelines and aesthetic stimuli to heighten and support purchase decisions.

Russia - Dom Farfora

www.farformarket.ru

Dom Farfora is a retail chain of multi-brand stores for those who like an elegant and stylish table. Offering customers 1,000 m² (10,750 ft²) of sales space, the Dom Farfora flagship store, founded in 1965, is one of the largest and oldest specialized stores in Moscow.

Almost all of the best-known luxury brands of the world are represented including Meissen, Moser, Odiot, Puiforcat, Royal Copenhagen and Christofle as well as a unique selection of brands that are leaders in contemporary design. Dom Farfora's goal is to offer their clientele a wide selection of the best global products and services.

Switzerland – Pro Table

www.protable.ch

From beginnings in 1983 as a traditional tableware store, Pro Table has grown to become one of the finest specialized shops for a wide array of customers. As an example, gourmets and coffee aficionados are drawn to the store to purchase coffee beans that have been roasted in-house. Roman Wehrle, the inspired leader of this family-owned business, takes care of the retail store and the cooking school, always happily adding his special flair for seasoning. Taking one step into the store, customers instantly recognize why Pro Table is the place to find everything for table and kitchen. It celebrates table-culture, and lives for its customers every day!

Turkey – Boyner Evde

www.boyner.com.tr

Offering a wide range of products from home textiles to furniture, kitchen accessories to small home appliances, Boyner Evde introduces everything one could ever need for the home. They renew their collections and themes each season to offer different styles, inspiring customers with trendy collections. In addition to giving customers updated décor options, Boyner Evde's collections also offer a unique alternative for customers' gift-shopping needs. In addition to branded products, the retailer also presents home essentials and appliances from selective local and international brands. Boyner Evde is a great source of inspiration for customers, offering numerous alternatives to renew the whole appearance of a home with seasonal trends and themes.

United Kingdom – Lakeland

www.lakeland.co.uk

Now in its 50th year, Lakeland has grown into the UK's favorite specialty homewares store. Family owned with family values, Lakeland trades from 67 stores across the United Kingdom and nine in the Middle East. The retailer publishes 18 catalogs a year and is a true multi-channel business with an award-winning website that attracts over 600,000 visits a week. Loyal customers look to Lakeland for both products and inspiration through a video rich site that also offers helpful hints, tips and recipes.

Known as "the home of creative kitchenware," Lakeland's mission is to change the way people think about cooking, making the difficult possible, and helping the home chef achieve professional results every time.

Uruguay – Motociclo

www.motociclo.com.uy

From its beginning in 1931, Motociclo has proudly become a reference in Uruguay. Against all odds, the father and son team of Leonardo and Fabian Rozenblum, has successfully transformed an industrial company that once only built bicycles into one of Uruguay's finest retail stores. They fondly remember Jamie Rozenblum, the company's founder, for his inspiration and most important teaching of all, "Do not be a spectator to your life, you are the protagonist." This proverb has been closely followed through the years and has helped Motociclo become a leading retailer with 44 locations found throughout Uruguay, featuring innovative products for the home, recreation and healthy living.

USA – Rolling Pin Kitchen Emporium

www.rollingpinonline.com

Since 1995, Rolling Pin Kitchen Emporium has been *the* culinary institution in Southeast Florida. The husband-and-wife team of Dave and Karen West have created a concept that allows customers to sample products, purchase kitchen tools and develop the cooking skills necessary to become confident home chefs. The 420 m² (4,500 ft²) store is stocked with more than 15,000 items, including quality cookware, professional cutlery and kitchen tools.

The 93 m² (1,000 ft²) Culinary Center, which was remodeled in 2012, offers up to 12 cooking classes each week, including demonstrations and hands-on classes as well as classes taught by celebrity chefs. Five large, flat-screen monitors and three motion-driven cameras are placed strategically in the Culinary Center to capture all the action.

USA – MetroKitchen.com

www.metrokitchen.com

For 16 years, MetroKitchen.com has featured products from premier brands that are devoted to equipping the home cooking enthusiast with quality tools that inspire the professional chef found within. MetroKitchen.com's product offering is driven by a deliberate and careful selection of a curated assortment of brands. The end result is a product offering that features thoughtful design and maximum utility.

MetroKitchen.com's cornerstone is excellent customer service, great pride being taken in their dedication to the principle of "Treating Customers the Way You Want to Be Treated." The online retailer takes special care to train their staff on the brands carried. Detailed information about each product is available on their website, allowing consumers to always have access to information they need to make the right choices.