

# Previewing The National Hardware Show

The industry's must-attend annual event is quickly approaching; have you registered yet? Here are some reasons why you won't want to miss this year's show.

By Jasmina Radjevic



With roughly 800,000 sq.ft. of floor space, this year's National Hardware Show will have more than 3,000 exhibitors displaying new products. (Photos: National Hardware Show)

**T**he National Hardware Show (NHS), one of the largest events focused on home enhancement, is just around the corner with many new features for retailers to check out. The show is scheduled for May 8-10, 2007, at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla. The convention covers roughly 800,000 sq.ft. and will have 3,000 exhibitors excluding international pavilions.

This exhibition should attract retailers from every channel selling products for the home, both indoors and out. This year, *Lawn & Garden Retailer* is sponsoring Lawn & Garden World at the show. "We are thrilled to have *Lawn & Garden Retailer* as our partner for the 2007 Lawn & Garden World," said Rob Cappiello, industry vice president, NHS. "Lawn & Garden World, together with *Lawn & Garden Retailer*, will help independent retailers enhance their businesses through insight, trends, new unique products and the latest business information to stay on top."



The National Hardware Show, along with the co-located Gourmet Housewares Show, currently attracts more than 750 housewares retailers, according to the NHS. Lawn & Garden World is also one of the fastest-growing segments of the show floor and should have more than 1,000 exhibitors.

## Homewares Show Debuts

In response to top retailers' growing sales in the housewares category, the new Homewares Show will debut this year alongside the 2007 National Hardware Show. The Homewares Show

was created to provide a time-saving, efficient way for manufacturers to connect with their retail buying customers and prospects.

A new generation of homeowners is leading the way in the home entertaining category, affecting product sales and industry trends, according to the NHS. These developments will be on display at the Homewares Show, but here is a sneak peek:

### Say goodbye to formal dinnerware.

Consumers are buying more casual dinnerware, including seasonal patterns and trendy colors, as formal dinnerware sales continue to decline.

**It's about quantity, not quality.** Larger, informal entertaining is fueling the trend for large sets of less expensive tableware, and shoppers are buying a variety of colors that change with the holiday or season.

**Cooks stay in the kitchen.** Today's entertainers tend to host guests in the kitchen and family room, which reflects the need for bigger and better modern kitchen styles.



**Less brand loyalty.** Consumers are becoming less concerned with brand names when shopping for casual dinnerware and are looking for trendy styles with less emphasis on well-known brands.

**Black is back.** New homeowners are turning to darker colors for home décor and furniture, with various shades of black, gray, brown and bronze finishes.

## New Resources Offered

One of the biggest challenges for independent retailers is finding new products that will differentiate them from big box competitors. With more than 3,000 exhibitors and thousands of products, it may become even more challenging to find the right products and manufacturers to fit each retailer's particular niche.

For 2007, the NHS is offering new tools to help retailers navigate the show floor, target the companies they would like to see and discover new product innovations for their businesses in an efficient and organized way. "We know that retailers' time away from their stores is very precious," said Cappiello. "So we have devised these tips to help leverage their time while gaining as much competitive intelligence as possible."

This year, retailers can look for these new resources at the show:

**Exhibitor downloads and customized scheduling.** Prior to the show, retailers can download the product categories of interest to them from the NHS Web site and create a customized shopping schedule based on booth locations.

**Inventors' showcase.** To provide retailers with a resource for innovative products for their customers, the NHS has created a special showcase for inventors with new ideas and products.

**New Product World.** New this year are links from the New Product World exhibits to each

manufacturer's booth to make it easier for retailers to purchase the new products they see.

**Weekly countdown newsletter.** By registering to attend the show and providing your E-mail address, you will receive a newsletter that provides updates on new products, events at the show, tips for shopping the show, travel and entertainment ideas, manufacturers' presentations and more.

## Outdoor Living Trends

Outdoor spaces have become as important as the kitchen and living room, and today's consumers want to furnish and decorate them with as much care as they do their indoor spaces. According to the National Gardening Association, sales for lawn and garden products totaled \$36.8 billion in 2005.

In 2006, Lawn & Garden World was the fastest-growing segment of the show floor, according to the NHS. "Homeowners today are spending more and more of their time and money on the outdoors and are looking to make these spaces as aesthetically pleasing and comfortable as possible," said Cappiello.

Some of the top trends in outdoor living showcased at the 2007 Hardware Show will include the following:

**Front-yard landscaping.** As back yards shrink, water features, fences courtyards and patios are moving in front.

**Container gardening.** This gardening method includes clustering multiple pots, vertical gardening and placing pots in flower beds.

**New-and-improved decks and patios.** Weatherproof and wood alternatives are in demand, and natural products such as tumbled stones and bricks are growing in popularity.

**Exterior lighting.** Hard-wired lighting can be used to illuminate the garden, trees and house while also enhancing security. ▶

## Attend The Hot Topics Conference

Lawn & Garden Retailer is sponsoring a Hot Topics Conference at the National Hardware Show. Developed by Stan Pohmer, a consultant and an editorial advisory board member for *Lawn & Garden Retailer*, and the publication's editors, this conference session is for independent garden center operators. It will take place Wednesday, May 9, 2007, at 10:00 a.m.

Pohmer, founder and CEO of Pohmer Consulting Group and executive director of the Flower Promotion Organization, will be leading the session, entitled "Innovation As A Competitive Edge." Independent garden centers and their supply partners should have a significant advantage over mass marketers to create innovation, according to Pohmer. Their smaller size and organizational structures should allow them to move with greater speed to introduce new ideas, products and services. But as an industry, most of the "innovations" made are incremental operational enhancements. As a result, we don't realize the true benefits, nor do we create an image in the consumer's mind that sets independents apart.

In this session, attendees will review the opportunities for real innovation that can make a difference in their image and bottom line. Don't miss it!



Stan Pohmer



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## Preview Party Success

After an impressive turnout at the first preview party last year, the National Hardware Show (NHS) hosted its second annual preview party. Leading manufacturers displayed new products for 2007 and mingled with

reporters. NHS creators offered a sneak peek into a few of the new products for 50 top consumer media in a home-themed preview party on Nov. 28, 2006, in New York City.

The event took place in a midtown

loft space, a location that provided a home-like setting to present products. Guests enjoyed wine and hors d'oeuvres while sampling the latest outdoor products and power tools.

Sixteen manufacturers presented

new home, hardware and outdoor products to be shown in 2007. These manufacturers were a representation of the depth of product categories in home improvement that will be exhibited at the NHS.

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New this year are the manufacturer spotlight areas, which are micro-booths that provide an area to display products, distribute literature and have sales staff ready to answer questions.

**Water features.** Fountains and other water elements enhance sight and sound, while landscaped ponds, streams and waterfalls offer peace and tranquility.

**Outdoor fireplaces.** Once a necessity in the den or living room, the fireplace is becoming part of the screened porch and is primarily used for ambience.

## Lower Costs For You

The 2004 National Hardware Show was the first to pick up drayage cost for exhibitors (costs associated with delivering materials to booth). The 2007 show will continue to offer this benefit, including exhibitors in the Homewares Show.

Another money-saving advantage is that Orlando is one of the nation's most affordable trade show destinations. Attendees can save with non-stop flights from almost every part of the country and abroad, according to NHS.

## Register Now

For more information on the 2007 National Hardware show in Orlando, Fla., visit [www.nationalhardwareshow.com](http://www.nationalhardwareshow.com). The NHS travel desk has all the options and tools you need to book your trip, with special discounts available. ✂

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