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## STATS: Internet Shopping Surges

If you were wondering where your shoppers were the week before Christmas, perhaps they were online. During the first 50 days of the 2006 holiday season total online retail spending reached 21.68 billion, marking a 26 percent increase over the 2005 holiday shopping period, according to comScore Networks.

And rather than drop off before Christmas, online shopping picked up for the first time, with procrastinators spending more than \$1.5 billion between Dec. 18 and 20, up 35 percent from 2005. Cyberspace watchers say consumers feel more confident that their packages will arrive on time, thanks to retailers' shipping guarantees. Source-comScore Networks

## Merchandising Tips: Talking Tabletop

**Q: Do you recommend retailers add a mix of casual tabletop styles to their kitchenware assortments?**

**A:** Approximately 20 percent of our overall membership of 160 stores includes tabletop along with kitchenware. Glassware, bakeware, serveware and tabletop make up about 20 percent of the overall store assortments.

**Q: What sort of tabletop pieces are best for smaller size stores?**

**A:** Serveware and bakeware

## FEATURE: Manufacturers Target Gourmet For Tabletop



Presentation pieces from Earthborn Studios

Casual tabletop is growing in importance as a business for gourmet retailers, with the result that manufacturers are turning to that market for new product introductions. Manufacturers say gourmet retailers are trendsetters, and that is the attraction.

"If the product appeals to independent retailers then it will appeal to everyone and have sales success in every market," says Keith Morrison, president of Signature Housewares. "We always think of the independent retailer when developing our product lines," he says.

A key reason for that, say retailers and manufacturers, is that the tabletop market is changing as consumers demand a wider range of casual tabletop styles. For instance, potter Tena Payne has developed a firing technique that lets her unique hand-turned dinnerware stand up to the abuse of a restaurant kitchen. Payne first sold her Earthborn dinnerware line to hotel restaurants like Sensei, at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, and says consumers sought her out. "They went out to dinner and then wanted to know where to buy the dinnerware," Payne says. Thanks to that consumer demand Payne now targets the high-end gourmet retail channel, as well as the restaurant world. To date she has more than 60 independent retail stores as customers.

While Payne's dinnerware features a unique organic style, a key element for any gourmet retailer looking to get into tabletop is whiteware, says Bob Coviello, president of the buying group H.T.I. "I think retailers should have twelve linear feet of whiteware, at least," Coviello says. Still, Coviello warns retailers to be selective and not get caught "competing on place settings, with big box stores, because you can't show enough of them," he says.

Mike Fear, owner of Bath, Maine's Now You're Cooking likes Pillivuyt's line of white dinnerware and serving pieces. "It's gorgeous and we do quite well with it," Fear says.

## GOOD REP: Top Ten Reasons to Work with Independent Representatives

*"I get customers who think it's more efficient to pick up the phone and place an order with the manufacturer's toll-free number. They think they are saving time, but they aren't. They are likely talking to a clerk at a factory who will take their order but has no idea of their business."* -- Peter Bang-Knudsen, president of the independent manufacturers representative group Bang-Knudsen,

pieces are a better fit for stores that are limited as to space. Anything oven-to-table justifies a storage solution for consumers more readily than a single purpose item.

**Janis Johnson**, president, the Gourmet Catalog Company

## HAVE FUN!!

Food Memoirist

**Bonnie Wolf** joins the cast at

The Gourmet Housewares Show this May.

Wolf, an NPR commentator, will read from her new book, **Talking with**

**My Mouth Full: Crabcakes, Bundt Cakes, and Other Kitchen Stories.**

In the book Wolf ponders why people eat the way they do, especially over the holidays. For instance Thanksgiving, she happily regards as "Pure gluttony with no religious undertones." Wolf will sign copies of her book during events at the Gourmet Housewares Show's Culinary Center



Even as we celebrate fine cooking, more than 12 million children face hunger in America

today. As we gather for our 31st annual show this year in Orlando, I am proud to say that The Gourmet Housewares Show is partnering with "**Share Our Strength**," one of the nation's leading anti-hunger organizations. We will donate a percentage of each ticket sold for our opening night party, to Share Our Strength. We invite you to come and join in both our fun and the fight against childhood hunger. We hope to see you there.

**Susan Corwin**

vp and show manager



Inc.

1. We send people out to stores to help set up displays.
2. We help stores obtain credit and stay credit worthy by going to bat for them with a manufacturer to extend credit.
3. We have training and experience and knowledge of your business: we are a free consulting service.
4. We do in-store training of staff.
5. We'll do in-store training of staff more than once since stores have a lot of employee turnover.
6. We scour the markets around the world for new products and trends.
7. If a mass merchant is buying a product by the container load, I can steer my retailers away from it.
8. If the product is a dog, the minimum wage clerk answering the manufacturer's 800 number won't tell you that.
9. I'll tell you if there is a special product promotion.
10. If we can't add value to your sale, we can't stay in business.

## RETAILER FOCUS : City Kitchens, Seattle Washington

**Kerry Niesen** is returning to the Gourmet Housewares Show this year as a buyer for City Kitchens, as he has for years. This time though, there's a twist: Niesen now owns the store.

Niesen bought City Kitchens — a downtown Seattle fixture — from founder Robert Hammond this past fall. And Niesen knew what he was buying: he had been working at the store for the past 13 years, starting at age 19.

Although Niesen plans few immediate changes, he is putting his own spin on the store's merchandising plan, bringing a wider tabletop assortment to what he describes as a "hardcore housewares" store.

"We have started building a dinnerware business around certain lines. People now know to come and look for dinnerware here," he says.



**WHAT ARE YOUR HOT TOPICS?** If you'd like us to address your specific concerns let me know. Contact me at 207-799-3473 or at [thya\\_porter@glmshows.com](mailto:thya_porter@glmshows.com) And have a happy and successful New Year!. — **Thyra Porter**, editor, Gourmet 365.

If you would like further information about the exhibitors mentioned and/or the Opening Night Party benefiting Share Our Strength, please contact Susan Corwin at [susan\\_corwin@glmshows.com](mailto:susan_corwin@glmshows.com)

The Gourmet Housewares Show kicks off May 8, 2007. For further information, go to: [www.thegourmetshow.com](http://www.thegourmetshow.com).



The Gourmet Housewares Show® is produced and managed by George Little Management, LLC.

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