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Though it is at the heart of the "Sunshine State," Orlando's average annual rainfall amounts to over 50 inches, keeping Central Florida lush and green throughout the year.

The tourism industry is the biggest employer, with Walt Disney World the largest employer overall.

Source: Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission

HAVE FUN!!**FEATURE: Orlando Rocks For Adults**

Orlando, sitting smack in the center of Florida, has a subtropical climate that inspires people to return year after year. More than 50 million visitors drop by annually, and not just for family fun.

Grownups have a great time too, with a host of spas, restaurants, art museums and historic sites to tour. Orlando also features a multi-cultural mix of inhabitants, though most international visitors hail from the United Kingdom. For example, more than one million Brits crossed the pond to visit Orlando in 2004, trailed by 631,000 Canadians, says the U.S. Department of Commerce.

**Magical Kingdom, Orlando, Florida**

And while the city's theme parks are among the most famous in the world, the night life for grownups includes a mix of fine dining and museums. For instance during the Gourmet Housewares Show in May, a hot exhibit for tabletop fans could include the Secrets of Tiffany Glassmaking at the Charles Hosener Morse Museum of American Art. Round out any evening with dinner at one of the more than 5,100 Orlando-area restaurants.

Orlando's downtown district is thriving and features Lake Eola as a centerpiece. (As well as the Gourmet Housewares Show's Opening Night Party, May 8 at The History Center.) Trendy neighborhoods to explore include Thornton Park, a center of new urbanism; College Park, a mix of bungalows and turn-of-the-century houses; and Winter Park where you will find many specialty shops and restaurants.

Good Rep : Starting up a Store: Do you use independent reps, or go with the company?

Katy Kistler has worked with independent reps for years as a buyer, and as a store owner she prefers them, but knows when to draw the line.

"When the reps are good I'll use them, but they don't get more than one or two chances, and if they aren't good I go back to the company."

Still, she says that her current reps, "Have been awesome, helping us with demonstrations, training and getting the store set up."

RETAILER FOCUS :

Chef Rocco DiSpirito

takes a turn at the Gourmet Housewares Show's Culinary Center, showing off his unique Italian-American cooking style, in an appearance on behalf of the anti-hunger organization Share Our Strength.

Orlando is famous for many things, so please make sure you attend the



Opening Night Party, which kicks off Tuesday, May 8th at 6 pm at The History Center in Orlando's beautiful downtown district. Free shuttle buses will be provided. Meet chef Rocco DiSpirito and network with all the others who are devoted to both gourmet products and good works: a percentage of the \$50 ticket price benefits Share Our Strength, which works to end childhood hunger.

Best,

Susan Corwin

vp and show manager

Rabbit & Company

Katy Kistler says she's happy the Gourmet Housewares Show has moved to Orlando this May. "I've been going to the show for a long time and it's great to have it move closer to retailers on the East Coast this year," she says.



Kistler, a housewares buyer for nearly 20 years, opened a store with partner Jim Yeager in Hendersonville, North Carolina, last August. The two have combined his love for wine and her love for housewares into Rabbit & Company, carrying a selection of wines, kitchenware and certain perishable foods like cheeses and smoked meats. With that mix, gift baskets are a hot seller with the local customer base, she says.

"We live in a town that has lots of retired people. Even though they are retiring, they are building new homes and they are very interested in cooking and building a new lifestyle," she says.

And that demographic also means new cookware and an interest in cooking courses. Rabbit & Company is teaming with a chef to offer cooking classes this spring. Another hot item is tabletop, and Kistler says the retailer plans to add more tableware products this year to the 5,000-square foot store.

What issues do you care about? Let us know by giving me a call at 207-799-3473 or e-mailing me at thyra_porter@glmshows.com [Thyra Porter](mailto:thyra_porter@glmshows.com), editor, *Gourmet* 365.

The Gourmet Housewares Show runs May 8-10, 2007. For complete show information, please visit: www.thegourmetshow.com.



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

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