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B U S I N E S S

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Retail Theater Revival

Housewares auditions for a starring role in Ron Johnson's remake of JC Penney

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Buyer Buzz

Ambiente Sees Positive U.S. Retail Turnout

BY PETER GIANNETTI
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FRANKFURT— A teeming Ambiente here defied the continuing economic malaise shrouding Europe while signaling improved retail prospects in the United States.

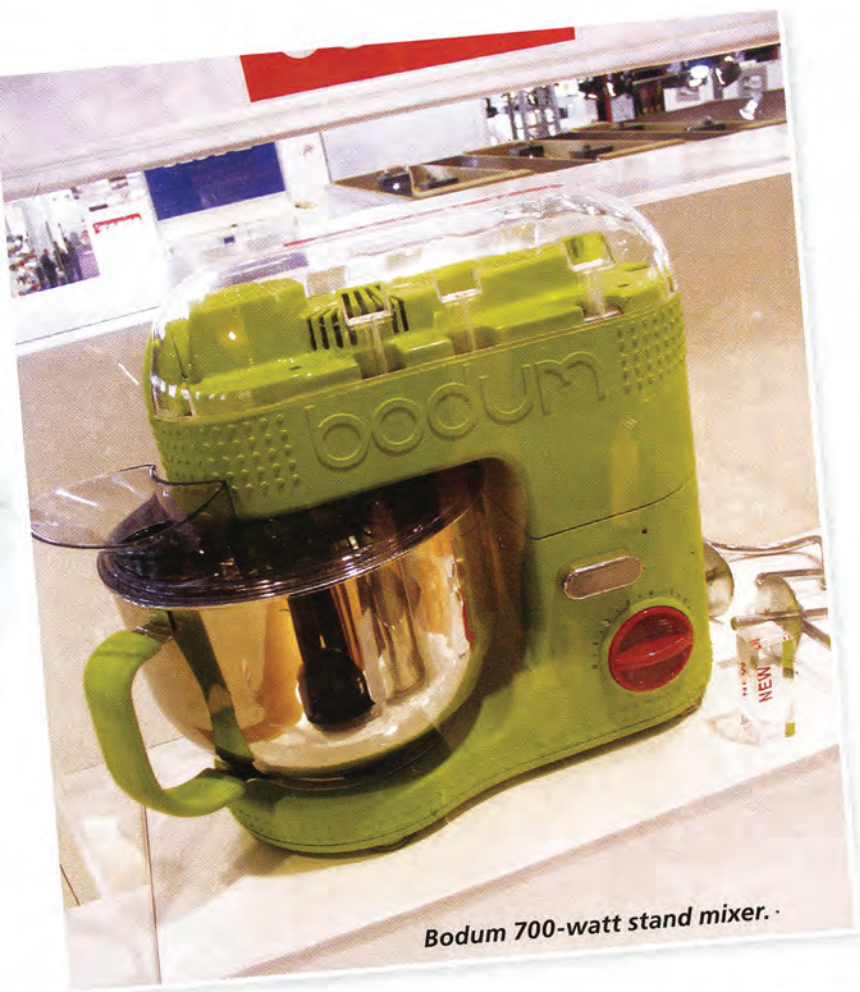
A robust representation of U.S. retailers shopped the housewares and tableware halls at Messe Frankfurt, by some accounts the most U.S. retail outlets at the fair since pre-recession totals.

Michael Francis shepherded a large contingent of J.C. Penney merchants and product developers as speculation about how housewares would fit into the retailer's transformation became a central

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Vacu Vin wine set.



Bodum 700-watt stand mixer.



Chef'n 3-in-1 cutting board with slide-out drain and tray.

Ambiente Report

Strong U.S. Buyer Turnout Gets Jump On 2012 New Products In Frankfurt

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theme along the show's aisles.

It wasn't coincidental, perhaps, that Martha Stewart, a cornerstone of J.C. Penney's next-generation home strategy, also made the rounds at Ambiente in pursuit of inspiration and resources for her J.C. Penney rollout set for 2013.

Several other prominent U.S. retailers got a jump on back-half planning at Ambiente, among them Macy's,

Bloomingdales, Bed Bath & Beyond, Crate & Barrel, Williams-Sonoma, Target, Home Shopping Network, Amazon.com, and TJX.

Home Shopping Network's senior housewares team headed to Germany fresh off what it told HOMEWORLD BUSINESS® was a resounding launch of HSN's Bon Appetit collection.

On the supplier side, this year's Ambiente likely won't be defined by the breakout of a single, overriding

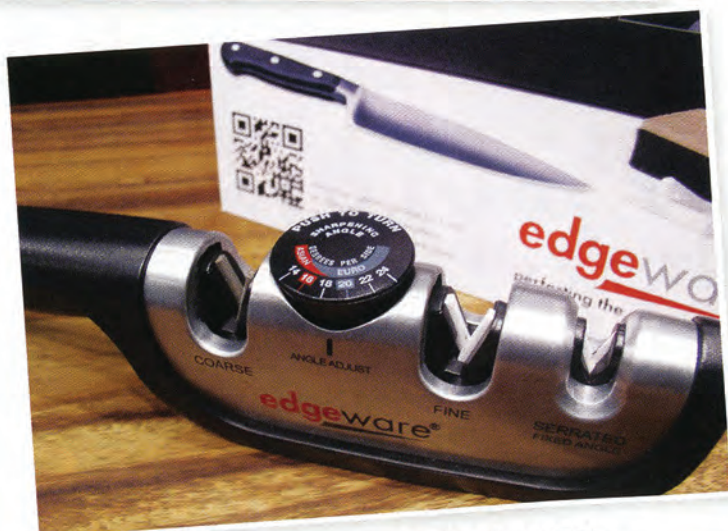
product trend, although an increasingly liberal use of vivid color (less prevalent in recent recession-muted editions of the fair) seemed to be in full bloom.

Ambiente, nonetheless, served up plenty of new items, collections and line extensions to entice U.S. and international buyers.

The following is a recap of new housewares products featured at Ambiente that could be ticketed for the U.S. retail market later this year:



Castey Fundix cookware.



Edgeware Angle Adjust manual knife sharpener.



Cristel cookware.



Customizable Soehnle bath scale by Leifheit.



Bormioli Rocco Frigoverre Multi oven-safe glass.

• Lodge Manufacturing unwrapped Lodge Seasoned Steel, a U.S.-made carbon steel skillet collection designed for high-heat cooking and featuring an easy-release oil finish.

• Fissler presented the new Vita Quick pressure cooker, whose handle has a squeeze-activated lock for easier one-handed operation. The Vita

Quick cooker will get promotional support in the U.S. by former Top Chef competitors the Voltaggio Brothers (Bryan and Michael).

• The Cookware Company, marketer of Green Pan, rolled out Twizt, a new collection of cookware with a lid-locking system designed for safe and easy hot water straining. The

pots and pans are inserted into accompanying melamine bowls for serving.

• Le Creuset released its latest color—the vivid, Mediterranean-inspired Marseille blue—featuring the hue across its kitchenware program from cast-iron cookware to a new collection of ceramic

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Outset corn holders by Fox Run.



Rabbit wine chilling carafe by Metrokane.



Mastrad Top Chips chip maker in new colors.



Berndes cookware.



Microplane meat tenderizer.

Eye-Catching Colors Return To Ambiente

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coffee accessories.

- Bormioli Rocco extended the utility of its glass food storage offering with the launch of the oven-safe Frigoverre Multi and Frigoverre Microwave with vent flaps in the lids.

- Chef'n featured its new PrepStation 3-in-1 bamboo cutting board with a slide-out silicone drain on one side and a slide-out tray on the other side. The company also showed the Prep'n Catch board with a detachable silicone food collector.

- Spanish cookware maker Castey announced its U.S. launch with a pair of non-stick-coated, cast-aluminum lines featuring integrated induction bases: Fundix, showcasing removable silicone-wrap handles in five fashion colors; and Vulcano, a step-up collection offering several items with fixed silicone handles.

- Leifheit featured the Simple Slice two-way slicer; a new splatter screen that fans open to cover cookware and closes for storage; and single-handle can opener with a strong magnet to grab can rims. The company also showcased Soehnle bath scales whose platform designs can be custom-created by consumers using a web application.

- Dansk by Lenox previewed a reissue of its classic Kobenstyle

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Dansk Kobenstyle cookware.



Fissler Vita Quick pressure cooker.

European Brands Vie For U.S. Eyes In Frankfurt

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enamel-on-steel cookware in blue and red with white interiors and all white.

- Bodum showcased its expanding e-Bodum lineup of premium kitchen electrics featuring rubber-coated exteriors in several colors exhibiting the signature Bodum dotted touch pad design. Among the additions are a 700-watt stand mixer and a 500-watt blender.

- Edgeware unveiled its Angle Adjust manual knife sharpener, a two-stage (coarse and fine) device with a dial-activated adjustment covering a range of recommended European and Asian blade angles.

- Bialetti's Aeternum brand of white-ceramic coated aluminum cookware has been extended with a new brown line featuring induction-capable stainless steel bases.

- Berndes showcased its expanding assortment of colored aluminum cookware with ceramic non-stick coatings.

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Fresh water line by Pasabahce's Denizli.



Lodge seasoned carbon steel cookware.

Frankfurt Serves Up Buffet Of New Lines

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- Vacu Vin uncorked a new collection of cocktail accessories: a cocktail shaker equipped with the company's sealing silicone lid design as first featured on its Pop-Some containers; a 3-in-1 set consisting of a muddler with hard rubber cap, a jigger and a tongs; and recipe sticks that attach to tall drinkware to guide the measuring of ingredients into popular cocktails.

- Fox Run Brands' Outset grillware division showcased a collection of corn on the cob accessories: colorful corn holders with threaded prongs; a 2-in-1 corn prep tool for removing corn silk and stripping kernels from the cob; and a silicone spreader for single tabs of butter.

- DKB's Cole Mason division showcased the brand's new series of contemporary-styled electronic salt and pepper mills in stainless steel and other upscale, decorative finishes.

- Metrokane uncorked its white wine chiller, featuring a lead-free crystal carafe inserted with a stainless steel ice chamber to quickly chill a bottle of white wine without diluting. A silicone top seals the top of the carafe.

- Mastrad followed up last year's launch of the Top Chips silicone microwave chip maker with a new variety of bright colors.

- Pasabahce showcased in its Denizli hand-made glassware brand the Fresh collection of water bottles and pitchers; each base is infused with fruit-colored accents resembling large drops.



Cole Mason electronic mill by DKB.



Le Creuset's new Marseille blue collection.



Twizt pan by The Cookware Company.