

WARMING UP IN RENO!

By Deidra Darsa

It's a new year and the gift-giving holidays are over. Yet, all across the country people continue to make lists of coveted items.

But those lists aren't for Santa. They're retailers' shopping lists looking to "select the best" in hearth, patio and barbecue products at HPBExpo 2009.

With the holidays behind her, Debbie Ewens of Warm Hearth, La Mesa, CA, has begun her list of those special items she wants to carry in her store. "Usually by January, I start making a list of products I want to make a point of finding," she said. "We'd like to see more outdoor fun items."

Looking to excite her California clientele, Ewens is searching for lightweight material masonry items such as fireplaces and pizza ovens - "maybe something in lightweight waterfalls," she noted.

A wood-fired oven by Earthstone may be just what Californian Ewens is dreaming to find. This unique pizza oven can be placed inside or outside, according to Jean-Paul Yotnegparian, vice president of sales, Glendale, CA. "It operates like brick ovens found in pizza restaurants, only it is small enough to use inside or outside of a house."

Three-thousand miles away in White River Junction, VT, Bill Mathewson, president of Home Comfort Warehouse, is making a plan to visit wood and pellet stove exhibits. "The hot items in our stores are pellet stoves, pellet inserts and wood inserts, so I'll be looking to see if there's anything new."

To meet consumer demand for stoves, Mathewson expanded his manufacturer base, but is looking to downsize next year. "I started the year with two pellet manufacturers and now I have five. Next year I don't want five, so I'll be looking to see which ones to keep."

In Vermont, he noted that homeowners realize they can turn their fireplaces into an efficient heater with an insert

continued on pg. 78



Chairman's MESSAGE

Dennis Smith, *Chairman, Hearst, Patio & Barbecue Association*

With the holidays over, many of us are looking ahead to what the new year will bring and the resolutions that we have made. This year, perhaps even more important than ever before, is remaining resolute in our commitment to strengthen our businesses and our industry ties. And, there's no better place to do that than at HPBExpo.

As we struggle to find our way in the financial turmoil that surrounds us, HPBExpo is the one bright light that has the potential to generate innovative solutions to today's real problems. It is the only platform where we, as individuals, can hone our skills and experiences in a highly competitive market by taking advantage of the education and certification programs available. By building our business management, marketing, sales and prod-

uct knowledge, we are better prepared to face and tackle challenges throughout the coming days.

Face-to-face meetings with manufacturers and distributors build strong partnerships and the hands-on experiences with cutting-edge hearth and grill products give you a voice that your competitors may sorely lack. That makes you the "go-to" dealer when consumers seek out competent dealers they can trust.

And finally, your industry family and friends. When you arrive in Reno, you will be surrounded by those who share your common interests, goals and hopes for a prosperous future in an exciting industry. That may be the best reason to attend HPBExpo.

As always, contact me at dgs@firegearusa.com if you have questions or comments.

and he will be looking for those at HPBExpo, too. “I started the year with two insert manufacturers and now I have three. I should probably be adding another line.”

New exhibitors and new products are what Jessica McCloskey, McCloskey’s Garden & Hearth, Williamstown, NJ, is seeking at Expo. “New products are what we’re looking for,” she said, adding that while there, she attempts to see everything. “We like to see the hearth and grill products burning in the outdoor burn area. We’re able to have a more hands-on approach there than in a showroom,” she said.

Among the outdoor displays, attendees will find new products at the Empire Comfort Systems, Inc., Napoleon and Stove Builders International exhibits. The Broilmaster Infrared R3 and the R3B grills allow much greater control over a wider temperature range, according to Jeff Cleveland, marketing manager, Empire Comfort Systems. The grills come with two individual variable gas valves, and are enhanced by the three-level stainless steel cooking grids and stainless steel warming rack.

The trend in gas fireplaces is towards a modern clean-face linear fireplace with a larger viewing area mounted higher up on walls, according to Greg Thomas, Napoleon Fireplaces director of sales. “The other trend is to more biomass-efficient products,” he said.

In 2009, Napoleon will be exhibiting new wood stoves, clean-face gas fireplaces, an outdoor patio flame with a glass or rock burner, and more. They are also planning to introduce a pellet/corn furnace.

For those looking to find a wood-burning stove, Stove Builder International will have two new products on exhibit in their booth and in the New Product Pavilion. The extra large Max Caddy that functions as a wood-only unit, a wood-electric combo, a wood-oil combo, or a wood-oil-electric trio and the Caddy Alterna, a 100,000 Btu warm-air pellet furnace from PSG with bottom-feed technology and a 240-

pound hopper capacity.

These and the many other new and improved products being exhibited at HPBExpo are what Micah Chaney is looking for to run his The Fireplace Connection, LLC, business in Summit, MS. “I go to Expo to look for new products and connections for what I do, which are retrofits into existing homes. I look for things that make my job easier and economical to complete turnkey projects in people’s homes.”

Industry old-timers may be surprised to find Century Fireplace Furnishings acquired by hearth accessory company, Portland Willamette. “We’re resurrecting that product line for 2009 and will be showing the folding screen line at Expo,” said John Boire, general manager. “I’m sure the customers of Century will be excited because they have had a difficult time getting these products for the past couple of years. And, they work well with gas fireplaces as decorative accessories and to keep young kids away from the hot glass.”

There will be accessories galore at Expo 2009, and not all for the fireplace. “We’re introducing the Turbo Q, an attachment that goes onto the rotisseries of gas grills and turns them into convection grills,” explained Chuck Adams, CEO, The Companion Group. “We’re also introducing a v-shape smoker box that goes between the heat deflector bars and the grate.”

Having won a Vesta Award for its Monster grill brush in prior years, The Companion Group is introducing its larger model, the Mega Monster grill brush, a much-requested item, says Adams.

And that’s just the beginning. Look for stainless-steel griddles, a chili pepper roasting rack, a pepper slicer, skewers and slider baskets, and more.

Outdoor chefs will find those helpful accessories a benefit while preparing meals in their outdoor kitchens. This year Lynx Grills is completing its outdoor kitchen concept with refrigerators, ice makers, doors, drawers, side burners and an outdoor venting system, an important tool for semi-enclosed kitchens.



RENO FUN FACT

Watch for the *HPBA Journal Reno Fun Facts Contest*.

Every month, until Expo, you have a chance to win an Education Passport for HPBExpo 2009 in Reno.

To enter, send your guess to Deidra Darsa, darsa@hpba.org (put Reno Fun Fact Contest in subject line). Good luck and see you in Reno.

Question: How many “landmark” trees are there in the city of Reno?

Entries must be received by January 19 and the winner will be drawn on January 22.

“People planning outdoor kitchens want to use them year-round and ventilation is part of that,” said Brian Eskew, marketing manager. “We’ve also introduced an electric outdoor patio heater to extend the usability of the outdoor cooking season.”

This is just a snippet of the exciting new products that will be on display at HPBExpo. So, whether looking indoors or outdoors for grills, fireplaces, stoves or patio furniture with flair, the place to be March 19 – 21 is Reno, NV.



The *HPBA Journal* is intended to provide in-depth information to the hearth and outdoor products industry. Statements of fact and opinion are the responsibility of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the officers, board, staff or members of the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association.

Copyright ©2009 by the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association is prohibited. Direct requests for permission to use material published in the *HPBA Journal* to the Director of Communications, HPBA, 1901 N. Moore St., Suite 600, Arlington, VA 22209, (703)522-0086 or email: hpba-mail@hpba.org.