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The Power of Independents

2018 Buying Group Spotlight

Buying groups provide tools and connections to increase market share and enhance profitability. To do this, they enhance offerings and look to innovate, believing that “good enough” is not “good enough.” Read what each group will focus on in 2018, and how they plan to reach their goals. Story on page 56.

John Pope, Owner of F.W.Webb Co., Passes Away

On Jan. 9, 2018, at the age of 86, John D. Pope, company owner and emeritus president and CEO of F.W.Webb, passed away bravely battling Parkinson's Disease. John was a visionary who embraced



John Pope led F.W. Webb for more than five decades – longer than any other previous owner or leader in the company's 151-year history.

emerging technology as a way of ensuring customers always received the best products, services, solutions and expertise. In 1962, F.W.Webb was among the first wholesale suppliers in the industry to adopt computerized inventory management. Among the other innovations he spearheaded to keep the company on the cutting edge was the establishment in 1973 of a novel, yet unproven concept for wholesalers – central distribution (CD) warehousing.

Under John's strong, capable leadership, F.W.Webb Co. has grown both organically and through acquisitions. When he took charge unexpectedly in 1961, the company had seven locations and \$5 million in annual sales revenue. Today, F.W.Webb is a \$1 billion+ industry powerhouse – the largest distributor of its kind in the Northeast, with an ultra-modern 1 million-square-foot

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Highlights from KBIS 2018

New products and trends heat up sunny Orlando.



BY LINDA JENNINGS

With freezing temperatures gripping most of the country, the prospect of sunny Orlando as the venue for KBIS 2018 was even more enticing than usual this year. And, attendees were not disappointed by the balmy Florida weather OR the fabulous exhibits from many of the industry's most exciting companies.

With 600 brands filling two halls, the show was buzzing with interest, as thousands of guests admired exhibits, discovered new products, and attended parties and presentations. KBIS is always a wonderful opportunity to network and admire the "latest and greatest" of what's new in the kitchen and bath industry. Following is a sampling of some of the products and companies that caught our attention during the three-day show.

Lenova

Known for its beautiful sinks, Lenova used KBIS to unveil three new models of its innovative Ledge Series of kitchen sinks. The collection is most notable for the engineered platform ledge that converts the sink into a food preparation center when accessorized with an optional stainless-steel colander, roll-up grid drainer, and bamboo cutting board. Lenova now offers the Ultra Ledge sink in 46- and 60-inch models for the ultimate in a professional-quality work-station. Ledge is also available with a 9-inch apron front that blends traditional styling with a contemporary vibe. Finally, Ledge is now available in NovaGranite, a proprietary mix of 85 percent crushed natural granite that gives the look and durability of solid stone.

Another stand-out from Lenova at the show was its TKO Touch Faucet. A tap of the wrist or forearm on the body of the faucet activates

this battery-powered model. With a pull-down sprayer and two beautiful finishes, this sleek faucet offers smart design features such as automatic shut-off and integrated sensors to indicate water temperature. www.lenovasinks.com

Atlas Homewares

Atlas Homewares is always on the edge of fashion-forward design. It delivered on that reputation by displaying three new trendsetting collections at the show. The Bradbury line has a chic industrial vibe that is very "now," with exposed hardware and an interesting juxtaposition of curves, lines and angles. It takes the classic aesthetic up a notch, successfully mixing vintage and contemporary styles.

The Oskar Collection is all about fun and offers circular knobs and curved pulls that complement a variety of decors. The knobs have grooved borders that add an extra touch of style, while the handles are notable for their smooth lines and coordinating ends.

The Kate Collection



Atlas - Bradbury

pays homage to a refined sensibility, bringing an elegant luxury to any design space. The square pulls have a brushed texture with contrasting border that adds visual interest and a hint of glamor; while the complimentary pulls echo that look with squared ends that cap long rectangular handles with a graceful curve. www.atlastothetrade.com

Victoria + Albert

The new Vetralla Collection by Victoria + Albert caused a buzz at the show, as people admired its simple yet elegant silhouette with a double-ended design and deep bathing well. Its gently angled sides are perfect for a relaxed recline during a luxurious soak. Vetralla is

well-suited for modern bathrooms where space is limited. It measures a compact 58 ¾ inches x 29 ½ inches x 22 inches, making it the smallest bathtub in Victoria + Albert's inventory. Vetralla 2 is sized at a more generous 65 inches

x 28 ¾ inches x 21 ⅝ inches, and is perfect for family bathrooms.

Both tubs are available in seven distinctive external finishes, including a dramatic Gloss Black and a more neutral Stone Gray. As with all Victoria + Albert's baths, they are made using the brand's exclusive material, ENGLISHCAST; a unique blend of Volcanic Limestone and high-performance resins. www.vandabaths.com

Du Verre

Du Verre Hardware often infuses its collections with dramatic flair through its partnerships with leading artists. Its latest collaboration with Clodagh was on display at KBIS, including three new hardware lines that highlight its use of eco-friendly materials and natural elements.

The Primitive Collection features a bold, geometric pattern that is a Signature Clodagh motif. It is offered in Oil Rubbed Bronze, Polished Aluminum or Satin Nickel.



Lenova NovaGranite Apron Front Prep Sink and TKO Faucet



Lenova Cabinet Depth - 9" Apron Front Ledge Sink



Vetralla Collection by Victoria + Albert

PLUMBING & SHOWROOMS



Du Verre Primitive



Du Verre Stacked



Du Verre Tribal

The Tribal Collection was inspired by African weaving sticks and translated into sleek and modern hardware. Finish options include Antique Brass, Oil Rubbed Bronze, Satin Nickel or Polished Chrome. Stacked is a modern, tactile and luxurious collection that is available in Oil Rubbed Bronze or Satin Nickel. All three collections are made from recycled aluminum. www.duverre.com

Ruvati

The new epiGranite Collection from Ruvati was a show stealer with its brilliant pops of unexpected color. These stunning kitchen sinks have the luxurious look of solid stone and are colored all the way through for a rich, consistent look that will never fade or discolor. Choose from vibrant hues, such as Carmelian Red, Catalina Blue and Tequila Lime,



Ruvati EpiGranite

or more neutral tones, like Caribbean Sand. The epiGranite sinks offer a distinctive alternative to stainless steel or porcelain and are extremely durable and resistant to stains, bacteria and extreme temperatures.

Also noteworthy in the Ruvati display was their new Perfect Divide kitchen sink.

As a double-bowl configuration with a low and wide platform as a divider, this ingenious sink brings an extra layer of utility to the kitchen by creating a non-slip platform to place a pot while filling with water. The sink is constructed of 16-

gauge stainless steel and includes heavy-duty sound guard padding and rear drain placements. Measuring 33 inches x 22 inches with a 10-inch bowl depth, the Perfect Divide sink has a modern look with zero radius sharp inside corners and a beautiful artisan-grade satin finish. www.ruvati.com



Ruvati EPerfect Divide

That wraps up another successful KBIS. The show is a wonderful opportunity to stay current on the latest trends in the kitchen and bath marketplace as well as network with fellow industry professionals. As always, we are filled with inspiration by the exceptional creativity and craftsmanship that were on display, and we look forward to an amazing year of innovation and new ideas. We'll see you in Vegas next year as the show moves to the Las Vegas Convention Center in January 2019. 🌟

Linda Jennings is president of Jennings & Company, a public relations agency specializing in the decorative plumbing and luxury hardware industry. For more than 20 years, she has worked with significant editors and journalists in the consumer home market, identifying trends and providing newsworthy products. Jennings can be reached at linda@jenningsandcompany.com.

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Kohler Helps ‘Konnect’ Bath and Kitchen Products

Kohler Co., a manufacturer of kitchen and bath products, has unveiled KOHLER Konnect; a new platform that allows consumers

to personalize their experience with KOHLER products through app presets, and automate everyday tasks in the kitchen and bath through voice-control.

Consumers can interact with KOHLER Konnect by using voice-commands, hands-free motion control and personalized presets managed through a new application for iOS and Android devices. Consumers can operate the kitchen faucet, control features of an intelligent toilet, adjust the lighting embedded in a bathroom mirror; run an invigorating shower; and automatically fill a bath to a desired depth and temperature all by using voice-

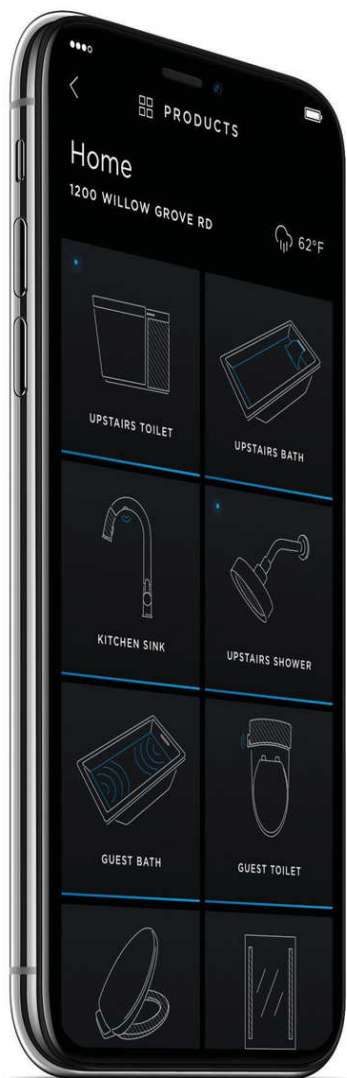
commands. Powered by the Microsoft Azure cloud platform, KOHLER Konnect allows consumers to set up tailored preferences, automate everyday tasks and stay abreast of water usage of paired products.

“Voice services and connected devices have become integrated into every facet of the home – with the notable exception of the bathroom, until now,” said David Kohler, president and CEO of Kohler Co. “We provide thoughtful design and technologies that offer convenience and functionality to enrich your personalized experiences, making them easier, more comfortable, and more enjoyable. Whether you’re

getting ready for work, helping your children through their evening bedtime routine or simply in need of some personal relaxation, KOHLER Konnect is the next evolution of our leading-edge kitchen and bathroom innovations that help make these everyday moments better.”

To provide wider accessibility and optimal functionality to its new portfolio of products with KOHLER Konnect, the plumbing brand is offering support in select products for Amazon Alexa, the Google Assistant and Apple HomeKit to bring technology into the bathroom in meaningful ways.

Visit www.kohler.com/kohlerkonnect



Luxury Products Group Partners with DXV, Barber Wilsons

Luxury Products Group, LLC, a buying group for decorative plumbing, hardware, lighting, and more, has entered into an agreement with the LIXIL Americas brand DXV bathroom and kitchen fixtures and faucets, and Barber Wilsons & Co., a luxury faucet maker based in the UK.

“DXV is a natural fit for LPG,” notes Jeff MacDowell, director of LPG. “DXV offers the finest products that fit our members showrooms perfectly. While we have aggressive growth strategies, we must make sure that the products we offer are right for our members and their customers. This agreement was well planned and will help carry LPG into the next chapter.”

Barber Wilsons was founded in 1908 and has since then supplied

top hotels around the world with plumbing products.

In the late-1970s, many of the company’s 50-year-old designs were made again to refurbish Victorian period homes. The company also holds a Royal Warrant from Queen Elizabeth II.

“Barber Wilsons & Co. is the pinnacle of luxury,” MacDowell added. “They offer unique, meticulously crafted products for the discriminating buyer. We will work together to gain market share in select markets where the demographics make the most sense.”

LPG was created in 2009 by the members of Omni Corporate Services Ltd., Inc., as the avenue for members to network with like-minded people sharing

ideas and challenges to expand their showroom businesses, as well as an opportunity to buy and sell products from a variety of showroom-oriented vendors worldwide.



Ferguson Manager Buys Barrett Supply

George Fisher, a longtime general manager at Ferguson Enterprises, has purchased one of his former

competitors, Barrett Supply Co.

It marks the first time that Barrett, based in Augusta, Georgia, will no longer be helmed by a member of the family that started the PVF supply house nearly a century ago.

“I don’t think anybody would do a better job than George – I honestly mean that,” Matt Barrett told *The Augusta Chronicle*.

Financial terms of the sale, which were finalized on Jan. 3, were not disclosed. However, Barrett and Fisher said the deal includes all accounts, inventory and intangible assets – including the company’s 95-year-old name. Fisher also will have an option to purchase the company’s 2 ¼-acre warehouse and distribution facility following a five-year lease.

The deal also includes a 50 percent stake in Barrett’s well-water pressure regulator device, the Barrett Pump Stop.

Matt’s grandfather, F. Madison Barrett, started the company and sold the famed Augusta National Golf Course, its first irrigation system.

Fisher, originally from North Carolina, came to the Augusta area to join Ferguson in 1988. Barrett, 66, said he decided to retire to spend more time on his hobbies, which include traveling with his family and working on his Model A Ford.

Visit bit.do/BarrettSupply for more information.



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