

## Portmeirion Group acquires Nambe



Leading manufacturer and worldwide distributor of high-quality homewares, Portmeirion Group, has acquired Nambé, a US-based premium homewares business. Portmeirion Group has agreed to purchase premium branded US homewares business Nambé for a cash consideration of \$12m.

Nambé designs, sources, markets, and retails Nambé branded products in homewares. Nambé was founded in 1951 and its range now includes cutlery, glassware, dinnerware, kitchenware and home décor.

Nambé's sales are largely concentrated in the US through wholesale channels, online and through eight retail stores across New Mexico and Arizona and reported sales of US\$18m in 2018.

The acquisition provides the Company with additional scale in its key US market and strategically complements its existing US subsidiary while continuing to diversify the company into new homeware product categories.

Portmeirion Group intends to leverage the Nambé product ranges through its existing US sales channels and global sales infrastructure. The Company also expects to benefit from the expertise of Nambé's contemporary design consultants across the Group's brands and ranges. Further cost saving.

The Company is also delighted that Nambé's key management team will continue in their roles and believe they will further strengthen its existing US-based team. ■ *Source: Gifts and Decoratives*

## Back-to-School shopping stronger than ever, says NRF

As students gear up to go back to school and college, families plan to spend more than ever on supplies ranging from pencils and backpacks to computers and dorm refrigerators, according to the annual survey released today by the National Retail Federation and Prosper Insights and Analytics.

"Consumers are in a strong position given the nation's growing economy, and we see this reflected in what they say they will spend on back-to-class items this year," NRF president and CEO Matthew Shay said. "We're expecting record spending and retailers are ready to provide students with all the items they need for a successful school year."

Families with children in elementary school through high school plan to spend an average \$696.70. That's up from \$684.79 last year and tops the



previous record of \$687.72 set in 2017. With fewer families surveyed saying they have children in grades K-12, spending is expected to total \$26.2 billion, down from last year's \$27.5 billion despite the increase in per-household spending. Families with college

students are expected to spend an average \$976.78, which is up from last year's \$942.17 and tops the previous record of \$969.88 set in 2017. With fewer survey respondents saying they are attending college, spending is expected to total \$54.5 billion, down from last year's record \$55.3 billion. Total spending for K-12 schools and college combined is projected to reach \$80.7 billion, down from last year's \$82.8 billion largely because of the decreased number of households with children in elementary through high school. According to the survey, clothing and accessories will top K-12 families' expenses at an average \$239.82, followed by electronics such as computers, calculators and phones (\$203.44); shoes (\$135.96) and supplies such as notebooks, pencils, backpacks and lunch boxes (\$117.49). K-12 families plan to do most of their shopping at department stores (53 percent), discount stores (50 percent), online (49 percent), clothing stores (45 percent) and office supply stores (31 percent). Among K-12 shoppers, teens are expected to spend an average \$36.71 of their own money, up from \$30.88 10 years ago, while pre-teens should spend \$26.40, up from \$11.94 10 years ago.

College shoppers plan to spend the most on electronics (\$234.69), followed by clothing and accessories (\$148.54), dorm and apartment furnishings (\$120.19) and food items (\$98.72). They plan to do most of their shopping online (45 percent), followed by department stores (39 percent), discount stores (36 percent), college bookstores (32 percent) and office supply stores (29 percent). The survey of 7,660 consumers was conducted July 1-July 8 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 1.2 percentage points. ■ *Source: NRF*



## SSA and Wild Republic launch eco-friendly plush animals

SSA, the zoo, aquarium and cultural attractions retailer known for its nature-inspired toys, has launched a new line of sustainable plush animals in partnership with Wild Republic. SSA will exclusively introduce the line in over 30 locations inclusive of the Denver Zoo, Monterrey Bay Aquarium and Cincinnati Zoo in November 2019. The product line, which is made from 100 percent recycled materials, is part of the two companies' efforts to find innovative ways to be environmentally focused.

The new line will feature an assortment of animals including: a black bear, polar bear, dolphin, African elephant, hippo, koala, snow leopard, panda, penguin, raccoon, red panda, sea turtle, wolf and tiger. The product complies with certified global recycling standards. The products' quality and affordable price make the transition to 100 percent sustainable materials an impactful change in the industry, with a roll out to other retailers planned in 2020. SSA and Wild Republic first disrupted the industry in 2017 with the successful launch of the Quest toy line that eliminated the use of single-use plastic packaging.

"When we sourced a high-pile, outer fabric made completely from recycled materials, we knew we had a game changer. The cuddly toys are carefully crafted and incredibly soft. Everything from the biodegradable poly bag packing down to the soy ink printed hang tag; we've created an absolute environmentally conscious product," said Vishnu Chandran, president of Wild Republic. "We joined forces with SSA again, as it is a company that shares in our approach of prioritising conservation through action."



This new product line is part of SSA's larger commitment to sustainability and conservation efforts through dedicated initiatives focused on stopping waste from the start, transforming the industry responsibly, and supporting its partners for a sustainable future. Similarly, Wild Republic strives to be as environmentally friendly and ethically responsible as possible, committing to the removal of all single use plastics in its toy packaging. From creation to consumption, Wild Republic makes every effort to lessen the company's carbon footprint by reducing, reusing and sourcing sustainable products. ■

Source: GDA

## Need for consumers to see, touch, and try on clothes gives brick-and-mortar retailers an edge

The preference to see, touch, and try-on apparel before purchasing is the most important factor for 55% of consumers to choose shopping in-store rather than online, reports The NPD Group. When shopping for clothing in-store, 79% of adult consumers try on the items before buying, all or most of the time (42%) or some of the time (37%), according to NPD's apparel industry research.

While online sales may be growing faster, it is key to make the in-store shopping experience personal for the consumer as in-store accounts for the lion's share of apparel dollars," says Maria Rugolo, apparel industry analyst, The NPD Group."



In-store is also catching up to online with regards to convenience. Apparel shoppers have the option to buy-online-and-pick-up-in-store (BOPUS) or click-and-collect, which provides the accessibility of shopping online with the ability to see, feel, and try on an item in-store, if the consumer wants. BOPUS has been around for a while but most recently major brick-and-mortar retailers have enhanced the option by offering same-day or even quicker pick-up, curbside delivery, and other conveniences. Over the last 12 months, 21% of U.S. adults answered "yes" to buying apparel and footwear online and then picking it up in store, according to a survey by NPD's according to a survey from Civic Science for NPD's Trend Tracker.

"The ability for consumers to see, touch, and try on apparel appears to be an advantage for brick and mortar retailers," says Rugolo. Now coupled with more convenient ways to shop online and pick up, consumers may be more inclined than ever to make the physical trip. ■ Source: NPD