

Majap Dealers Embrace The Great Outdoors

By Alan Wolf awolf@nbmedia.com

NEW YORK – After meeting every conceivable consumer need in the kitchen and laundry room, major appliance retailers are turning their attention to the last uncharted section of the home: the backyard.

Once the province of home-improvement chains, furniture stores and big-box discounters, patio products have now crossed the radar of white-goods dealers, who are broadening their assortments beyond simple gas grills.

According to Bill Bazemore, president of Nationwide Furniture, a division of the Nationwide Marketing Group, outdoor living has become a \$4 billion business and is growing rapidly, as consumers look to enjoy spring and summer on fully appointed patios.

"Outdoor is absolutely huge," Bazemore said. "We're all changing our lifestyle and spending more time outdoors" – especially after these last two brutal winters.

Not surprisingly, the category has also caught the attention of fellow buying organizations like Brand-Source, which created a dedicated outdoor division two years ago. Its Outdoor Source unit was developed "to help members compete with big-box stores by offering a compelling and affordable assortment of outdoor products," the group said.

Similarly underscoring the importance of the sector was the recent addition of "outdoor" to the title of Mega Group USA's appliances VP Melissa ("Missy") Hodges. Mega, which serves some 1,700 independent bedding, appliance and CE dealers across the country, described the category as "highly profitable," and said the seasonal furniture, cooking and lawn-care brands it carries, such as Broil King, Briggs & Stratton, Laguna Grills and Trex Outdoor Furniture, account for nearly half of all outdoor industry sales.

While a growing variety of specialty retailers have joined the bandwagon, Bazemore believes that "appliance stores have probably been one of the most successful [channels] at adding outdoor," perhaps owing to their cooking heritage.

Dave Bilas, president/COO of Bazemore's \$15 billion parent organization, also attributed the category's growth to the wide net it casts, offering something for



Nationwide dealers check out the selection of rope hammocks and casual seating from Pawley's Island.



Louisiana Grills offers the Pit Boss line of wood-pellet-fired BBQs that grill, bake, smoke, roast, sear and braise.

everybody.

"What's the most important outdoor product? It depends on who you talk to," Bilas said. "For the husband it might be an outdoor TV or a grill. For the wife it might be furniture or an outdoor fireplace. It's very broad and is going in a lot of different directions" – which plays to the multi-category strengths of the group's TV and appliance dealers.

For Bazemore, the grill, hearth and furniture-based business can be summed up succinctly in three words: "Eat, heat and seat!"

Outdoor Mounts Stay Rugged For The Elements

By Lisa Johnston ljohnston@nbmedia.com

NEW YORK – Although outdoor TVs haven't yet reached mainstream status for consumers, those who do have them may seek extra-rugged mounting solutions that won't degrade from the weather.

These mounts are all designed to withstand weather and corrosion to some level, including one that pledges protection during hurricane-force winds.



The truss-suspended outdoor mount from **Premier Mounts** is weather and corrosion resistant, as well as galvanized for heavy salt air environments. It's wind rated for up to 90 mph, according to the company, and can be mounted in four fixed-tilt positions. The mount, which features a removable back cover, can be used with 6-, 8- or 10-inch-wide I-beams.



SunBriteTV's SB-WM46 outdoor locking articulating wall mount is engineered to be compatible with the company's 32-, 46-, 47-, 55- and 65-inch landscape-orientation outdoor TVs. The weatherproof mount, which is made of UV powder-coated steel, features 10 degrees of display tilt capability; an optional security kit covers all vulnerable mounting points from tampering, said the company. The mount measures 4.36 inches deep when collapsed. It extends up to 17.3 inches and enables the TV to tilt up to 10 degrees. Suggested retail is \$465.



Peerless-AV's outdoor universal flat wall mount, designed for displays measuring 42 to 55 inches and up to 150 pounds, features a corrosion resistant E-Coat finish and plated hardware. It has the company's Hook-and-Hang design, as well as an open wall plate that provides wall access while keeping the display 1.77 inches from the wall. The mount features a list price of \$304.



Watch List

By Lisa Johnston

The Watch List is an ongoing series that focuses on CE start-ups reaching out to consumers via crowdfunding and other non-traditional methods.

Freiya

The Freiya smart watering can, developed by a company with the same name, features motion-sensing technology that can track when a plant is watered. Built-in Bluetooth will notify your smartphone when it's time for a plant to be watered or fertilized.

At press time, Kickstarter backers could pledge \$79 for one Freiya, said to be \$40 off the future suggested retail price.

Selling point: The accompanying app will incorporate such info as temperature and weather data to adjust watering schedules accordingly.



Gas-Sense

Just as its moniker indicates, the Gas-Sense is a gas-container monitor. The sensor uses thermal technology to identify the height of the surface of the liquid, according to George Edwards, the device's creator. Although it's being developed in London, U.S. Kickstarter backers can pick up one for approximately \$30.

Selling point: The accompanying smartphone app for this device will notify users when supply is running low, as well as learn usage habits to predict the time remaining.



Smart Peephole/Door Bell

This two-part device features a Wi-Fi camera that mounts to a door and a door bell that mounts to a power outlet. Kickstarter backers can receive both parts for \$119; a \$99 pledge provides just the camera.

Selling point: The camera slips into a standby mode when it's not in use, so the battery needs to be charged just twice a year, according to its developer, Iman Rezaezhad Gatabi.

