



Down the Aisles: Hudson's Bay

August 24, 2015

For most Canadians, Hudson's Bay Company is a name that has been a part of their lives for as long as they can remember. The company, which is Canada's longest continually running department store, was established in 1670. Since that day two and a half centuries ago, it has continued to expand and fine tune its innovative operations, firmly establishing itself as a brand that its millions of customers love and trust. Today, there are 90 Hudson's Bay Company stores, two outlet stores, and thebay.com under the company's umbrella, alongside the Home Outfitters brand in Canada and the Lord & Taylor brand in the United States. 'Home' is the company's homewares department, and in 2014, it opened a newly designed space called Home on Seven, on the 7th floor of its Toronto Queen Street premises, that became one of five Global Honorees in the 2015 IHA Global Innovation Awards (*gia*).

Every year, a jury comprising editors and publishers of the leading home and housewares trade publications around the world and four retail experts compare the merits of 25 retail stores that have been nominated as the finest in their country. This year, the jury found Home on Seven to stand out from the national winners not only due to its exceptional use of attention-grabbing graphics and signage, but also for its inspiring visual merchandising, which has become synonymous with the company's overall brand.



As the Senior Vice President of Home Alison Coville says, the aim of Home on Seven was to “build upon our strength in the market as a home and leading Gift Registry destination and enhance the bridal experience by grouping all relevant and related businesses on the one floor, including china, housewares, small electrical, cookware and bakeware, décor, giftware, gift registry, the Birks and Godiva shops and concierge, creating a one-stop shop for brides-to-be.”

From the outset, the store’s mission was to make the experience of organizing a wedding stress-free and enjoyable. To enhance the enjoyment factor and give the chosen warehouse space a residential loft-like feel, it first had to be turned into a calming haven, so windows were created to let in natural light. From there, the finest of details for each space in the store was considered.

The gift registry space, for example, is pivotal at Home on Seven, so it has become a stylish, welcoming space with a large consultation table and four private suites divided by glass walls. The design created a shop-within-a-shop feel for casual dining, and after it was enclosed with a metal cage and dark distressed wood panel bases, a classic storefront feel was achieved.

All sections of Home on Seven had to have their own distinct character to make customers feel less overwhelmed, which can often be part and parcel of a large department store experience. The housewares section, for instance, is decked out with dark metals and woods and veined counter tops, while light metals and white lacquer wood were applied in the china and gift registry section. Concrete-finish vinyl tiles were used in the store aisles, and warm vinyl wood planks were used in the casual dining area.

Everything about Home on Seven is about achieving warmth, relaxation and the welcoming feel people have when they enter the home of a friend or family member. In the gift registry area, a whitewash wood

composite floor was laid, and accents of powder blue were applied to the walls to bring out the original black-trimmed warehouse windows.

The meticulous planning regarding the store's design was something that impressed all of the judges, with special note being made of the fully-equipped, modernized demonstration kitchen imbued with an old-world European feel; the suspended, distressed pine wood slat ceiling; the placement of interesting pieces of furniture oozing character to create a residential feel, and the smattering of inspiration boards to highlight home fashions from across the world.



Home on Seven is all about making it easy for the customer to explore the store's different areas and find new products, while being continually inspired, so 'Trend Zones' have been mapped out to ensure cohesive flow. And first impressions do count, so as soon as customers step out of the elevator or arrive at the top of the escalator, they are visually stimulated and led from one exhibit of products to the next.

One of the many stimulating set-ups in the store is the street-like zone that resembles a market running down the middle of the Casual Dining Department. "This allows for strong trend, seasonal and occasion merchandise stories to be highlighted," explains Coville. "And feature display tables within both the casual and formal dining departments provide a blank canvas for our visual merchandising teams to create inspiring entertainment presentations for customers to mimic in their own homes when entertaining."

The fun use of colorful graphics and funky signage (often incorporating plays on words) throughout Home on Seven adds artistic flourishes while also giving customers something to ponder upon as they locate everything they need. From lit-up vintage signs to graphics created by an artist to emulate blackboard

scribblings, directives are relaxing and helpful, again adding to the stress-free environment. Betsy, the much-loved life-sized red cow, for instance, standing by the entrance with a helpful floor plan painted on her side, has become the store's icon, and her figure on canvas – Andy Warhol style – can also be found throughout the store.

Each year, Hudson's Bay Company publishes four 'Home' catalogs that are high quality magazine-style publications. Fans of the company love them, and they are styled, shot and written by some of Canada's best publishing talent. Products from Home on Seven are regularly featured in the catalogs, sending the Hudson's Bay Company message further afield, filling Canadians with endless inspiration.

That message is a clear and strong one: Hudson's Bay Company makes shopping a wonderful, stress-free experience, with some fun and frivolity thrown in for good measure.

For more information about the gia (IHA Global Innovation Awards) program, the co-sponsors, or participating in 2015-2016, contact Piritta Törrö at piritta.torro@inspiredconnection.fi. Additional information on the IHA's gia Awards program is also available online at www.housewares.org/gia.

For more information about the International Home + Housewares Show and to pre-register for the 2016 Show, taking place in Chicago on March 5-8, 2016, please visit www.housewares.org.

[g+ Share](#) [f Share](#) [t Tweet](#) [p Pin](#) [in Share](#)

Filed Under: All Posts<<https://blog.housewares.org/category/international-housewares-association/>>, [gia Retail Awards](#)<<https://blog.housewares.org/category/show/gia-retail-awards/>>, [Show](#)<<https://blog.housewares.org/category/show/>>
Tagged With: [Alison Coville](https://blog.housewares.org/tag/alison-coville/)<<https://blog.housewares.org/tag/alison-coville/>>, [gia](#)<<https://blog.housewares.org/tag/gia/>>, [global honoree](#)<<https://blog.housewares.org/tag/global-honoree/>>, [Global Innovation Awards](#)<<https://blog.housewares.org/tag/global-innovation-awards/>>, [Hudson's Bay Company](#)<<https://blog.housewares.org/tag/hudsons-bay-company/>>, [IBC](#)<<https://blog.housewares.org/tag/ibc/>>, [International Business Council](#)<<https://blog.housewares.org/tag/international-business-council/>>, [Piritta Torro](#)<<https://blog.housewares.org/tag/piritta-torro/>>

By clicking Accept, I agree with IHA's privacy and cookie policies. [Click here to review the policies](#)

ACCEPT