

Get It While It's Hot

Cooking appliances are regarded as one of the last categories to still generate big sales and big margins, but it's also one of the most complex. We spoke to more than 20 different brands to find out how they are maximising the opportunity. By Claire Reilly

Advances in induction and pyrolytic technologies, a focus on style and design, the continuing dominance of the celebrity chef — there are many factors affecting the way consumers look at cooking appliances and, indeed, their kitchen as a whole.

In the 12 months to May 2011, GfK data shows a relatively stable trade in

cooking appliances. Cookers experienced a 0.8 per cent decline in unit sales and a 3.5 per cent decline in overall sales value, with a significant decrease in built-in gas oven sales offset by a huge boost in dual fuel sales (albeit off a low base).

Electric hobs experienced a small boost in unit sales (compared to the 4.5 per cent dip in gas and mixed fuel), while

sales value was only increased in mixed fuel, and there by a mere 0.4 per cent.

Rangehoods contributed over \$88 million to the market in terms of sales value, but total unit sales were down by 3.9 per cent and total sales value was down by 11.8 per cent.

While there were fluctuations in the market, and the ratio of unit sales to sales value indicated a degree of price



erosion over the course of the year, it must be said that cooking appliances have shown resilience through a tough period in the retail and housing market.

For Andrew Cronin, general manager of **Smeg Australia**, it has been a very positive year so far. 2011 marks Smeg Australia's first year as an Italian-owned subsidiary, following the brand's departure from Hagemeyer Brands Australia. After leading the company out on its own, Cronin said he has been happy with their progress.

"The first five months have been really excellent," said Cronin. "Without doubt the industry is soft and retailing has been quiet, but we seem to have obviously taken share. And we're well ahead of last year so it's very pleasing."

"I think the dealer network appreciates the fact that we're backed by Italy into the long term. And I think from our people's point of view, we've got one brand to concentrate on and that's certainly paid dividends. I think it's been a win-win."

Cronin said the company would continue to focus on its strong offering of freestanding and built-in cooking appliances, including the promotion of the Opera 90-centimetre Upright (AIPYID-6, RRP \$10,990).

According to Cronin, it is the first freestanding cooker on the Australian market that offers both induction and pyrolytic cleaning in the one unit.

"There's been an enormous pick up of induction, and induction sales for us are working incredibly well — as well as pyrolytic — so people are picking up the new technologies and appreciating them," said Cronin. "It's taken a while, but it's just a matter of education."

"We've got one brand to concentrate on and that's certainly paid dividends"
— *Andrew Cronin, Smeg.*

"If you do any surveys at the consumer level, pyrolytic cleaning is one of the major points — nobody wants to clean an oven! It has an enormous benefit, and as the costs have come down, the products have become more in reach of the consumer."

"With induction, again, it's a very similar story. They're easy to clean products, very fast and efficient, with a true consumer benefit."

Smeg will be supporting their product line this year with two key promotions. For the built-in line, Smeg is offering a gift pack worth over \$1,000 to accompany sales of 68-litre ovens.

And for freestanding units, the manufacturer has a "3-6-9" promotion that will reward sales of freestanding

units (over \$3,000, \$6,000 and \$9,000 respectively) with bonus products such as a microwave or a wine beverage centre.

"There's something for everyone, depending on what budget you've got," Cronin said.

German manufacturer **Miele** is also offering consumers the benefits of a feature packed cooker with its larger capacity Combi-Steam Oven (DGC 5080 XL, RRP \$5,999).

According to Thorsten Kissel, product manager, food and beverage preparation, Miele Australia, this model is "the largest in Miele's steam oven range", thanks to its 48-litre cabinet, which has been designed for a 45-centimetre high recess.

"The Combi-Steam oven operates with dry heat and moist steam, separately or combined, for specific cooking requirements," said Kissel, who said this oven shows its true power when used in combination mode.

Cooking Snap Shots

- Induction and pyrolytic features are now widespread and set to filter down the ranges.
- Renovation market is buoyant as people stay home and want to improve their kitchen experience.
- Design is a strong motivator, with consumers looking for more than a bland appliance for their home.

Cookers									
Year Ending May 2011 vs 2010									
GfK	Units			Value			Av. Price		
	2010	2011	Change	2010	2011	Change	2010	2011	Change
Freestaing Cookers	189,063	189,180	0.1%	\$242,133,145	\$232,288,770	-4.1%	\$1,281	\$1,228	-4.1%
Electric Oven	138,959	134,247	-3.4%	\$187,647,609	\$171,386,752	-8.7%	\$1,350	\$1,277	-5.5%
Gas Oven	45,406	48,058	5.8%	\$44,770,572	\$46,647,454	4.2%	\$986	\$971	-1.6%
Duel Fuel	4,698	6,875	46.3%	\$9,714,964	\$14,254,565	46.7%	\$2,068	\$2,073	0.3%
Built-in Ovens	208,148	205,012	-1.5%	\$262,101,938	\$254,200,573	-3.0%	\$1,259	\$1,240	-1.5%
Electric Oven	196,718	194,119	-1.3%	\$248,009,421	\$240,906,665	-2.9%	\$1,261	\$1,241	-1.6%
Gas Oven	11,394	8,569	-24.8%	\$14,015,536	\$10,679,468	-23.8%	\$1,230	\$1,246	1.3%
Duel Fuel	35	2,324	6541.2%	\$76,981	\$2,614,439	3296.2%	\$2,199	\$1,125	-48.9%
TOTAL	397,211	394,192	-0.8%	\$504,235,083	\$486,489,344	-3.5%	\$1,269	\$1,234	-2.8%

"The process of baking and roasting using a sequence of humid and dry conditions is simplified with electronically controlled automatic programmes. These ensure superior cooking results that even inexperienced cooks can achieve with ease."

The oven also features an Oxygen Sensor that regulates steam levels, a roast probe for accurately measuring meat temperatures and an easy access water tank. In addition, the DGC 5080 XL features a non-stick "PerfectClean" finish that makes for an easy cleanup.

Kissel noted that it was products like this that kept Miele consistently at the forefront of domestic technology.

"Miele cooking appliances are so technically advanced they take the guesswork out of producing great food while adapting commercial cooking technology to suit the demands of the discerning home cook," he said.

From 1 September to 31 October 2011, Miele is offering a 5 per cent Kitchen Appliance Package Rebate on

the purchase of three or more items valued at \$7,500 and above. In addition, by purchasing any H 5000 oven (including the Combi-Steam model) with a cooktop and rangehood, customers will be eligible for a choice of bonus products, such as a Wüsthof carving set.

"Miele appliances are so technically advanced they take the guesswork out of producing great food"

— *Thorsten Kissel, Miele.*

Staying in Germany, **Bosch** is joining other manufacturers in espousing the benefits of induction cooking and pyrolytic cleaning.

Vanessa Coussias, Bosch's product manager, cooking appliances, predicts that these two advances in cooking

appliance technology will continue to be popular.

"We will definitely see more induction cooktops out in the marketplace, as manufacturers take steps to educate end users about the results that can be obtained using this form of heat," said Coussias. "Induction is growing at a larger rate than gas and ceramic in units, according to GfK. Most celebrity chefs still use gas, but this may change in the future."

"Easy cleaning is still key, and pyrolytic ovens are top of mind for home renovators and builders," she added. "We will start to see more accessible price points for pyrolytic ovens in the marketplace."

Bosch has two new offerings in the cooking category this year: the 60-centimetre Built-In Steam Cooker (HBC26D553, RRP \$3,199) and the 60-centimetre Built-In Oven (HBA13B251A, RRP \$1,199).

The Steam Cooker is targeted towards "answering the ever growing demand for

Hobs									
Year Ending May 2011 vs 2010									
GfK	Units			Value			Av. Price		
	2010	2011	Change	2010	2011	Change	2010	2011	Change
Electric	115,943	117,699	1.5%	\$100,361,587	\$97,455,112	-2.9%	\$866	\$828	-4.3%
Gas	94,108	89,847	-4.5%	\$69,677,057	\$65,558,739	-5.9%	\$740	\$730	-1.4%
Mixed Fuel	215	205	-4.7%	\$304,873	\$306,047	0.4%	\$1,418	\$1,493	5.3%
TOTAL	210,266	207,750	-1.2%	\$170,343,516	\$163,319,897	-4.1%	\$810	\$786	-3.0%



FREESTANDING COOKER

Smeg Opera 90cm Upright A1PYID-6

- 90-litre oven with 10 functions
- Five-zone induction cooktop
- Pyrolytic cleaning
- Thermosteal controlled cavity technology

RRP \$10,990

Smeg Australia 02 8667 4888

COMBI-STEAM OVEN

Miele DGC 5080 XL Combi-Steam Oven

- 48-litre cabinet
- Adjustable moisture content from 20% to 100%, with oxygen sensor
- Non-stick PerfectClean finish for easy cleaning
- Roast probe for measuring meat temperature

RRP \$5,999

Miele 03 9764 7130

BUILT-IN OVEN

Fisher & Paykel Izona CookSpace 0B90SMEPX1

- 90-centimetre width and 87-litre capacity
- Nine cooking modes
- Professional rotisserie can hold one or two birds
- Pyrolytic self-cleaning

RRP \$5,299

Fisher & Paykel 1300 650 590

"We will start to see more accessible price points for pyrolytic ovens in the marketplace"

— Vanessa Coussias, Bosch.

healthy cooking options", and boasts an Autopilot function that allows the budding chef to select an appropriate program, enter the weight and then let the oven calculate the perfect cooking time.

With the company celebrating its 125th anniversary this year, longevity is central to Bosch's business model.

"Every little aspect has been taken into consideration when developing all Bosch cooking products and they are all European built," she said. "Kitchens are expected to last for up to 15 years, so you want to ensure you are investing in the best, and we offer people that confidence."

Also part of the BSH stable is **Siemens**, which is this year offering the decidedly minimalist 90-centimetre Wall Mounted Canopy Rangehood (LC91BB550, RRP \$2,699).

Coussias noted that "coordinating ap-

pliances in the home, across all categories is becoming increasingly popular". With this in mind, the rangehood has a slimline stainless steel and black design that is designed to "suit most kitchens" and complement other stainless steel appliances.

The Wall Mounted Canopy Rangehood offers an extraction capacity of 1,000 cubic metres per hour, with relatively low sound levels (only 53 decibels at regular usage). It also features active carbon filters to help absorb cooking odours and the grease filters are dishwasher safe.

Fisher & Paykel is going large in the kitchen this year with their Izone CookSpace (OB90S9MEPX1, RRP \$5,299), an 87-litre capacity built-in oven complete with nine cooking modes, a professional rotisserie, a cool touch door (with four panes of glass for

safety) and pyrolytic self-cleaning.

This full-featured model is just one example of the advanced appliances that F&P offers, according to Peter Russell, general manager, marketing for Fisher & Paykel.

"With people living busier lives, new technology is being incorporated into our appliances to making cooking — and cleaning — even more enjoyable," said Russell. "We want our appliances to help make the whole process easier with responsive features that let consumers get on with cooking."

Russell conceded that the slow housing market was leading many consumers to "update" their current kitchens, choosing to kit them out with new cooking appliances.

F&P is also increasing its brand pres-

Rangehoods

Year Ending May 2011 vs 2010

GfK	2010			2011			Change		
	Units	Value	Av. Price	Units	Value	Av. Price	Units	Value	Av. Price
Chimney/Decorat	81,982	\$55,393,451	\$676	77,870	\$46,534,990	\$598	-5.0%	-16.0%	-11.6%
Telescopic	88,528	\$25,618,988	\$289	84,228	\$22,844,546	\$271	-4.9%	-10.8%	-6.3%
Standard	74,358	\$12,763,181	\$172	72,593	\$12,206,767	\$168	-2.4%	-4.4%	-2.0%
Canopy/Cartridge	5,218	\$4,968,800	\$952	6,714	\$5,938,721	\$885	28.7%	19.5%	-7.1%
Integrated	1,706	\$1,427,063	\$837	687	\$799,330	\$1,163	-59.7%	-44.0%	39.0%
TOTAL	251,791	\$100,171,481	\$398	242,093	\$88,324,354	\$365	-3.9%	-11.8%	-8.3%



BUILT-IN OVEN

Ive Built-in Combi Microwave Oven 645LTKWC

- Six cooking functions with three auto-cook options
- Automatic defrost by time and weight
- Stainless steel construction
- Drop down 1,500-watt grill

RRP \$2,999
Ive 02 8569 4600

GAS COOKTOP

Blanco 90cm Gas On Glass C6G905WTFCC

- Touch control with automatic ignition
- Five burners including wok burner
- Smooth, one-piece glass hob and cast iron trivets
- Timer function and safety lock

RRP \$2,499
Hagemeyer Appliances 1300 739 033

BUILT-IN HOB

De Dietrich Continuum Induction Hob DT11053X

- Four independent zones can be paired for larger 4,600-watt surface
- 15 power levels per zone with 4 boosters
- Independent timer and boil function
- Pot tracking function can recognise different cooking temperatures

RRP \$3,999
De Dietrich 1300 553 720



Gaggenau's Full Surface Induction Cooktop (CX480 100, RRP \$11,999) features one large zone that automatically detects pot size and location, no matter where it is on the surface (Sampford IXL: 1300 727 421).



The Omega 60cm Electric Oven (OO612XN, RRP \$1,499) with ten cooking modes, a boost function for reducing cooking times and a time-saving clean function (Hagemeyer Appliances: 1300 739 033).

ence this year with their involvement in the Good Food & Wine Show, and the sponsorship of a dedicated demonstration kitchen at the event.

Top names including Matt Moran, George Calombaris and Gary Mehigan of MasterChef fame will appear in the "Celebrity Theatre" and will "create signature dishes on Fisher & Paykel's state-of-the-art appliances", according to Russell.

"The Good Food & Wine Show is a perfect experiential marketing experience, allowing consumers to touch and feel the appliances, and for those who enjoy the Celebrity Theatre, there's the excitement of watching and interacting with chefs as they create their dishes," he said.

When it comes to cooking for enjoyment, the team at **Gaggenau** are certainly on top of the trend. Frances Lynch, brand manager at Gaggenau, said that Australians are increasingly becoming more educated and adventurous in terms of their cooking and they "have developed an appreciation for quality cooking appliances to achieve the desired results".

One such appliance is the Gaggenau Full Surface Induction Cooktop (CX480 100, RRP \$11,999) which will be available from October 2011. The cooking surface is zoneless, so users can place induction-compatible pots and pans anywhere on the full-induction surface and begin cooking.

"The cooktop is fast, precise and energy efficient," said Lynch. "It has automatic recognition of the shape, size

and position of cookware when placed on the surface, and if the cookware is moved, the new position is automatically detected."

Gaggenau's German compatriot **Neff**, distributed in Australia by **Sampford IXL**, is also addressing the needs of "adventurous" home chefs, according to Neff's national training manager, Matthew Ahern. "Neff appliances are designed to meet the demands of those with a passion for cooking," he said.

The company's stand-out product this year is the Vario Steam Slide & Hide Oven (B46C74N0, RRP \$3,799). The oven offers Neff's CircoTherm cooking system, which ensures even cooking on each oven shelf, as well as a unique "Slide & Hide" door.

The VarioSteam feature "enables moisture to be injected into the oven cavity at various intervals and intensities while the oven is operating, for even better results", said Ahern. "In addition to a crispy crust and luscious appearance on the outside, your food is also juicy and tender on the inside."

Neff is supporting its product offering with a strong online and social media presence, including a dedicated website (theneffkitchen.com.au) focusing on cooking, recipes and promotions, as well as Facebook and Twitter profiles.

Cooking is certainly pushing its way into the national consciousness of Australians, according to Daniel Bertuccio, marketing manager at **Ilve**. Speaking to *Appliance Retailer*, Bertuccio said that consumers are watching more cooking shows

"We're one of those brands that people want to upgrade to, so it puts us in a great position"

— *Daniel Bertuccio, Ilve.*



Asko's Sensor Pyrolytic Oven (OP8651, RRP \$3,099) is made from touch-proof stainless steel, with 5 cooking levels, 39 pre-programmed dishes and pyrolytic cleaning — complete with a locking, quadruple-glazed door for safety (Asko: 1300 002 756).



The Glem 90cm Monolith Upright Gas Cooker (ML96MVI2, RRP \$3,299) features 4 gas burners and an additional centre wok burner, as well as a fan-assisted gas oven with closed-door electric grilling (Emilia Glem: 1300 307 917).

and wanting to replicate those achievements in their own kitchens.

“Obviously there comes a time when the appliances they have just don’t cut it anymore and they decide they need to upgrade. We’re one of those brands that people want to upgrade to, so it puts us in a great position.”

As cooking appliances continue to offer new technology, Bertuccio predicted that the big push in the future would

be towards energy efficiency. Most importantly the unique colour “presents a significant breath of fresh air in the mainstream appliances category”, according to Jennelle Larven, brand manager for Blanco.

The 80-centimetre, 4-zone induction cooktop features an LCD display, 12 heat settings (plus an added boost capability)

“Consumers that are technology savvy are now expecting more from their appliances, so innovation and technology is important” — *Belinda Toner, De Dietrich.*

be towards energy efficiency.

“That will be a really big topic in the coming years. It doesn’t really seem to be going away and everyone just wants to be at the forefront of efficiency when it comes to electrical appliances in their house,” Bertuccio said.

“I don’t think it’s very far around the corner when they will start bringing out energy ratings for ovens. Cooking appliances are pretty immune to that at the moment, which is strange because they’re such heavily-used household appliances. But when those regulations come, in I think we’ll start to see some massive changes in the way ovens operate.”

In the meantime, Ilve is promoting its Built-in Combi Microwave Oven (645LTKCW, RRP \$2,999). While the compact stainless steel unit is designed for smaller kitchens, it features a 38-litre internal capacity and six cooking modes, including convection, drop-down grill, forced ventilation and automatic defrost.

While functionality is an impor-

tant selling point, design is also a key factor when consumers look at cooking appliances. **Blanco** are broadening its design offering with a new Metallic Champagne Induction Cooktop (CI804L, RRP \$3,499): a cooking surface that provides an option other than the ubiquitous black.

and programmable cooking controls. Each cooktop features a European-inspired black glass design, which gives “an elegant appearance that is also easy to clean: a big bonus to many cooks and a definite selling point for retailers”, according to Larven.

The 80-centimetre, 4-zone induction cooktop features an LCD display, 12 heat settings (plus an added boost capability)

Each cooktop features a European-inspired black glass design, which gives “an elegant appearance that is also easy to clean: a big bonus to many cooks and a definite selling point for retailers”, according to Larven.

Also under the Hagemeyer distribution umbrella, **De Dietrich** is one of the many suppliers noticing the so-called MasterChef effect that is making home cooks more adventurous.

“MasterChef and other popular cooking programs have helped to move Australia’s cooking habits,” said De Dietrich brand manager, Belinda Toner. “Cooking shows are showcasing techniques on how to cook complex dishes in an easy manner. Consumers that are tech savvy are now expecting more from their appliances, so innovation and technology is important.”

And as with many other suppliers, that technology includes induction. De Dietrich’s 4 Zone Continuum Induction Hob (DTI1053X, RRP \$3,999) is a built-in surface with 4 separate zones that can be used individually, for smaller pots, or in pairs to create a large cooking space. Each zone has 15 power levels that can be controlled on the touch display.

As true fans of the celebrity cooking phenomenon, De Dietrich is also sponsoring the Taste of Sydney and Taste of Melbourne festivals, with interactive stands showcasing the talents of famous chefs, as well as the MasterChef Live event in Sydney.

In addition, to support retail stores, the supplier is offering \$5,000 and \$10,000 promotion packs which allow consumers to bundle selected appliances and fit out their whole kitchen.

Hagemeyer’s third cooking appliance

brand is **Omega**, which is offering a stylish black glass finish on appliances to “provide an appealing contrast to the existing stainless steel domination in the kitchen”, according to Kelly Stewart.

The standout in the black glass range is the 60-centimetre Electric Oven (OO612XN, \$1,499), a model that combines “a sleek, glass finish with a feature set that was previously only available in

“Consumers are becoming increasingly environmentally aware and are seeking kitchen appliances that are energy efficient”

— *Lisa Sutcliffe, Asko.*

the most high-end products”.

The oven has 10 cooking modes as well as a Boost function that reduces heat-up times, and a Clean function that simplifies the cleaning process without the need for harsh chemicals.

Whirlpool is busy heralding “the birth of the ergonomic kitchen”, according to Alex Miles, category manager, cooking and home cleaning for Whirlpool Oceania.

This new-aged concept refers to a “kitchen designed around the user and their movements”, which is “less cluttered,

featuring flat-door cabinetry and appliances that transition to be more practical and user-friendly”, Miles said.

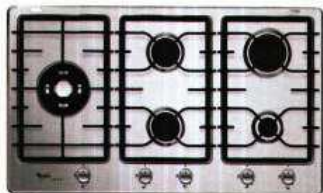
“Whirlpool has recognised that the resurgence in family mealtimes and home entertaining have increased the need to design the kitchen space as the heart of the household.”

“As a result, Whirlpool is developing cooking appliances that combine the best elements of technology, functionality and design to make mealtime preparation as easy and stress-free as possible.”

The hero product of the Whirlpool range is the 90-centimetre Ixelum Cooktop (AKT925/IXL, RRP \$1,149), which offers consumers gas cooking and total ease of use. The cooktop features Whirlpool’s patented Ixelum coating that prevents scratching, staining and discolouring, and makes the surface easy to clean.

“For the first time, Whirlpool has developed this anti-aging solution for its cooktops based on nano-tech material,” said Miles. “This not only enhances the overall stainless steel properties but means the surface can withstand scourers and copper bristles, and can be cleaned using only natural, non-aggressive detergents.”

Asko is also thinking about the environment this year. When discussing the consumer trends that are driving the current appliance market, Asko Appliances sales and marketing execu-



GAS COOKTOP

Whirlpool 90cm Ixelum Cooktop AKT925/IXL

- 90-centimetre stainless steel cooktop
- Ixelum coating resists scratching, staining and discolouring
- Smooth Ixelum surface ensures easy cleaning
- Five burners, including larger burner on left-hand side

RRP \$1,149
Whirlpool 1300 363 344

PYROLYTIC OVEN

Euromaid 60cm Self Cleaning Oven PS12

- European made stainless steel pyrolytic oven
- 14 cooking functions
- Four-layer, locking glass door
- 3 slide-out telescopic shelves

RRP \$1,799
Home Appliances 02 9958 3111

INDUCTION TEPPANYAKI PLATE

AEG-Electrolux 58cm Induction Teppanyaki Plate HC6S2600EB

- Two independent induction powered zones
- High quality stainless steel plate
- DirekTouch slide control
- Timer, cleaning and child safety lock functions

RRP \$7,389
Electrolux 1300 363 640

tive Lisa Sutcliffe said environmentally-friendly products are becoming more and more popular.

"Consumers are becoming increasingly environmentally aware and are seeking kitchen appliances that are energy efficient," Sutcliffe said. "Asko's strength is in producing kitchen appliances which meet these environmental concerns."

In light of this, the supplier is pushing a range of induction cooktops that are being favoured for "their ability to reach low simmer points and cool down faster than gas or ceramic cooktops".

And like many other brands on the market, Asko is riding the trend in pyrolytic cleaning to offer easy, chemical-free cleaning for consumers.

The Sensor Pyrolytic Oven (OP8651, RRP \$3,099) not only offers convenience in cleaning, but also boasts 5 cooking levels and 39 pre-programmed dishes, as well as a stylish TouchProof stainless steel exterior with a quadruple-glazed door and an LCD display.

Speaking about the current state of the market, **Glem Gas** Australasia general manager David Gilmore said that the cooking appliance sector is faring reasonably well.

"As a market segment, cooking is in better shape than some of the other appliance categories. I believe that we can continue to supply our customers with products that improve their lifestyle and add value to their homes without destroying price points.

"A cooking appliance is purchased and installed as a permanent fixture in the home, and a quality appliance adds value to a house. In these circumstances the reputation of the appliance brand will help influence the buyers."

The Glem 90-centimetre Monolith Upright Gas Cooker (ML96MVI2, RRP \$3,299) offers consumers quality and versatility, with "a unique combination of gas cooktop with a fan assisted gas oven in a domestic cooking appliance".

Aside from the benefits of gas, a cooking method perfect for "environ-

mentally conscious households", the cooker also features triple glass panels with a cool-touch outer door, single hand operation electronic ignition and a touch control digital timer.

Still in ovens, **Euromaid** is marketing its pyrolytic 60-centimetre Self Cleaning Oven (PS12, RRP \$1,799). It features a quadruple-layered glass door that automatically locks during the pyrolytic cleaning cycle, for complete safety. When the cycle is finished and cooking residues have been turned to ash, the user can simply wipe the oven out with a damp cloth.

According to Owen Morgan, managing director of **Home Appliance Group**, which distributes Euromaid, it is models such as this Self Cleaning Oven that are typical of the quality inherent in the brand.

"At Euromaid we are passionate about supplying quality cooking appliances to Australians at prices they can afford, achieved through keeping standards and quality high and keeping the unnecessary costs away from the customer," he said.

Also on offer is the Euromaid 60-centimetre Induction Cooktop (IHT60, RRP \$1,499), which features four zones

"The contemporary look of black glass is becoming more prevalent in modern kitchen designs"

— *Helen Finlayson, De'Longhi.*

controlled by an intelligent temperature limiter, contained at 300° Celsius, for fast and safe cooking.

"If liquid boils over onto the control panel, an anti-overflow system will automatically cease power to the hob, and

if a dish is forgotten or left on the cooking zone for a prolonged period of time, the hob automatically switches off."

Also distributed by Home Appliance Group in Australia is the European

brand **Fagor**, which is heavily promoting its celebrity chef connection this year, thanks to a spokes-chef deal with Justin North of Sydney's Becasse and Quarter Twenty One restaurants.

Fagor provides the appliances used in both restaurant kitchens, as well as the Quarter Twenty One Cookery School. According to Home Appliances' Owen Morgan, the partnership with North is an obvious choice considering the brand's history.

"Fagor commercial appliances have been the trusted brand for over 25 years in many of Australia's top restaurant kitchens," he said.

And now home chefs will be able to channel a little of that restaurant-quality cooking in their own kitchen. The Fagor 90-centimetre Induction Cooktop (IF-900S, RRP \$2,995) offers the standard features of an induction cooktop, including the benefits of speed and safety, but users will be able to boast that it is the same surface used by a famous celebrity chef, claimed Morgan.

After proving itself in the small appliances categories, Italian manufacturer **De'Longhi** is looking to expand its offering in the cooking appliance category this year, with the launch of its "luxury" Black Glass collection. Discussing this new offering is De'Longhi product manager, major appliances and comfort, Helen Finlayson.

"We are extremely excited to extend our range to include a collection of black designer glass, trimmed with stainless steel," said Finlayson. "It is a design that we believe will give our retail partners an even better selection of product options."

"Whilst there will always be a strong market for stainless steel kitchen appliances, the contemporary look of black glass is becoming more prevalent in



Smeg's local MD Andrew Cronin (left) with global vice president Vittorio Bertazzoni

modern kitchen designs. Black Glass with stainless trim is stylish and fashionable and consumers respond to these trends when given the choice.

Finlayson said this launch not only strengthened De'Longhi's position in the kitchen but also demonstrated its commitment to product design and functionality.

The range features four Black Glass Domino cooktops: Induction (DE302IB, RRP \$999), Halogen (DE302HB, RRP \$699), Gas Wok (DE30WGB, RRP \$699), and the 2 Burner Gas (DE302GB, RRP \$699).

Also new from De'Longhi is the eye-catching Thalassa Black Glass Designer Canopy Rangehood (DETHALASSA, RRP \$2,099).

According to Finlayson, the Thalassa "completes the collection and is an impressive focal point in any kitchen. The sleek touch control panel with blue LED ensures it is a stand out in the designer category".

The new De'Longhi ovens and Domino cooktops are due to arrive in September, while the Thalassa rangehood is due in December.

Also opting for a glass finish in its product line is **Seeley International**,

manufacturers and distributors of **Tudor Romeo** cooking appliances.

Frank Seeley AM, chairman and founder of Seeley International, spoke about the changes in consumer expectations.

"A few years ago, stainless steel was all the rage," he said. "Stainless steel is still popular, but is now being challenged by black and white glass, as homeowners look to liven up their kitchens."

In light of this, Seeley is championing its new range of sleek cooktops, which are available in both black and white glass, as well as the more traditional stainless steel. The cooktops are available in two sizes — 60 centimetres and 90 centimetres — with the larger of the two featuring a customisable configuration complete with one or two wok burners.

"Many households now are using woks for cooking more," Frank Seeley said. "With the twin wok configuration, you can have two dishes on the stove at once: it's so convenient."

This collection of cooktops ranges from the lower end 90-centimetre black or white glass surfaces, without wok burners (Black, TD117, RRP \$949; White, TD119, RRP \$949), up to the top

Winning Insights

John Murphy, the general manager of Winning Appliances, sat down with *Appliance Retailer* to discuss what is happening in the cooking industry and what we can expect over the next 12 months.

What trends have you noticed in the way consumers are purchasing cooking appliances?

Ease of use and efficient cooking are the key to consumer purchases in the kitchen. Induction cooktops, steamers and pyrolytic ovens meet these needs and are dominating sales. The brands that offer a full complement of appliances are gaining the market share in our showrooms, as many consumers also want to have consistent branding in their home.

Is induction here to stay or will consumers move back to electric/gas?

Why do you think this?

Induction is here to stay. The momentum behind induction cooktops is very strong as more choices in brands and sizes enter the category. The cooking control induction gives consumers is incomparable to other options and the issue of increased electricity prices appears to have little influence on the purchase. Gaggenau and De Dietrich are improving the technology and as more brands follow, the price will fall and the induction category will continue to grow.

How much of an impact are environmental concerns having on cooking appliance purchases?

In terms of large kitchen appliances, the impact is felt by the manufacturer more than the consumer, as they continually have to meet revised and improved performance standards to make their products more energy efficient. Australian energy labeling for large kitchen appliances is not as advanced as laundry appliances. As a result there are too many low end, less designed and engineered cooking products in Australia, close to 100 brands now, and this needs to be addressed through improved monitoring and formal standards.

Will supplementary appliances such as Steam and Combi ovens remain high-end or will they filter down?

These styles of cooking appliances are starting to become more affordable. Many manufacturers want to be in this category and are having to reduce their prices to fall in line with the market and be competitive. In addition, if a consumer buys a mid-range oven and wants a steamer or combi, then manufacturers need to have mid range offerings. The catch is to continue to produce high quality products that don't compromise the reputation of the brand, features and technology simply to compete in the category.

How do you see the renovation market performing over the next 12-24 months?

Still very competitive with constant financial pressures put on consumers in this current market place. The renovation market will only grow, and to meet this demand Winning Appliances has opened a new showroom in Narellan (July) and will open a new one in Brisbane (late 2011). While interest rates are up and there is uncertainty about more rate increases and electricity prices and the carbon tax, homeowners will stay put and renovate.



of the line 90-centimetre stainless steel surface with twin wok burners (TD100, RRP \$1,199).

“One of the reasons that Tudor Romeo has claimed a permanent niche in the market is its size — it’s perfect for replacing cooktops in older homes with narrow bench tops. The 90-centimetre cooktop cut-out dimensions are 860 millimetres by 394 millimetres, which is difficult to find these days.”

One relative newcomer to the cooking appliance scene this year is **Euro Appliances**. Established in 2004, the company expanded to a nationwide distribution in 2008 with warehouses across the country.

According to national sales manager Stan Poppleton, Euro Appliances now distributes a line of over 70 products, including ovens, cooktops, rangehoods and microwaves. The appliances are designed to reach the low-, mid- and high-end markets, with three distinct ranges: the Primera Series, the Grande Series and the **Fratelli Onofri** brand.

“In the wake of the Global Financial Crisis, most consumers are still reluctant to purchase higher end products,” said Poppleton. “For those who are looking to spend a little less but still get the quality for their money, Euro Appliances offers the popular Primera Series range.

“For those aiming a little higher in price and design we have the Grande Series. And if only the best will do for you, our Fratelli Onofri brand has the unique style and elegance to match. We provide the total kitchen solution: Euro ovens and cooktops will cook the perfect meal,” Poppleton said.

In the Grande Range, Euro Appliances has the 60-centimetre Fan Gas Oven (EBG60SS, RRP \$1,249). It offers fan gas assisted cooking, a

1.6-kilowatt electric grill that allows for closed-door grilling and a stainless steel finish with LED display.

Australian cooking appliance brand **Highland**, distributed in Australia by parent company **PR Kitchen Systems**, is currently spruiking its range of Australian-made gas and induction cooktops, as well as a collection of premium European ovens and rangehoods.

“Highland is able to offer its distributors strong margin, high price points and exclusivity, without having to introduce agency style restrictions”

— *Gavin McGill, Highland.*

National brand manager for Highland, Gavin McGill said, “Although the retail market is under pressure we have found the premium end of the cooking appliance market has continued to thrive and grow at a pleasing rate.”

The brand has a semi-exclusive distribution platform through “high-end” appliance retailers such as E&S Trading and Winning Appliances.

“Through this platform we are able to target consumers who are interested in quality and functionality rather than price,” he said. “As a result, Highland is able to offer its distributors strong margin, high price points and exclusivity, without having to introduce agency style restrictions.”

“In the future, Highland expects the premium end of the market to con-

tinue to prosper as more consumers are looking for quality and performance over price,” said McGill. “Purchasing Highland is an investment for the serious cook.”

The latest addition to the Highland range is the Professional Canopy Series of rangehoods, which features technological advances such as “remote motor technology producing massive proven air movement with substantial noise level reduction”.

The 90-centimetre Wall Canopy (CHH9011, RRP from \$1,999) is made from stainless steel with twin LED lighting, 4-speed electronic controls and an automatic shut-off timer. It has a 50-centimetre canopy depth and also features dishwasher-safe baffle filters that ensure easy maintenance.

Electrolux is all about the “showpiece” kitchen this year, according to Troy Hinchco, category manager — food preparation, **Electrolux Home Products**.

“It is increasingly the most important asset of a property in terms of resale value, and modern kitchen appliances reflect this trend in their style and evolutionary features.”

“Australian consumers want their

kitchen appliances to be versatile and ecologically responsible in terms of energy and water use. But they also want them to be easy to use and reflect who they are. People justify their indulgence in kitchen design and innovative appliances by ‘exploring’ new cooking styles influenced by other trends, such as mass media exposure and celebrity chefs.”

One of those celebrity chefs is the world-famous Tetsuya Wakuda, who has joined with Electrolux to vouch for its induction cooktop range.

Hinchco said this was an important selling point for retailers.

“Electrolux cooking brand ambassadors pioneer new cooking styles which, in turn, propel the popularity and sales of the relevant cooking appliances,” he said.

And for an induction surface that Tetsuya himself would be happy to use, Electrolux has released its 58-centimetre Induction Teppanyaki Plate (HC652600EB, RRP \$7,389).

The high-quality stainless steel plate features two independent thermostatically-controlled induction powered zones on the one plate, as well as DirekTouch slide control, a power booster and timer and cleaning functions. ☒

