

# Table talk

Kate Birch talks with independent homeware stores in the UK and Norway to find out how and where they source their unique product offer and what sells

## Triangle

**Victoria Mullen, co-owner, Triangle Store, London, [www.trianglestore.co.uk](http://www.trianglestore.co.uk)**

Triangle Store was set up by three friends in London in 2013 and has since become known as a retailer of beautiful products. It offers a mix of mid-20th Century furniture, accessories, ceramic tableware and kitchenware, including products from Hay, Normann – Copenhagen, Iittala and Ferm Living.

### On what criteria do you curate products?

We maintain a mix of products from local designers and the bigger brands. Our aesthetic is modern with a mid-century feel. We only sell products we like and display them in a way that feels like 'home'. A lot of customers say they'd like to live in the shop! The continual pursuit of original, distinctive designs is an ideology central to us, keeping us relevant and fresh.

### How key is it in retail to have a point of view?

It's essential to stand out and offer different products. Our focus is to keep the shop fresh and offer new products every season. We spend a lot of time looking for new designers and emerging brands. We don't work on a 'stock it high' basis. The shop is curated like someone's home – we need a point of difference in order to make people choose our shop.

### From where do you source product?

We attend most of the shows including Stockholm, Maison & Objet, Paris and Top Drawer in London. Although it's useful to catch up with some of our larger brands, we also find visiting new cities, shops, exhibitions and places of interest really useful.

### What trends are you seeing emerge?

People really want to buy quality products for their homes and kitchens, in particular. Customers are happy to pay more for an item that will last. There has been a real re-emergence in stoneware this year, with lots of smaller potteries creating beautiful ceramics for the kitchen. A big Japanese influence is happening.

### What tableware does well for you?

We've just started stocking Iittala, its glass and ceramic ware and stunning kitchen products. Due to demand, we've also expanded our kitchenware offer.



## Palmyre Living

**Nicolette Horn, interior designer, co-owner, Palmyre Living, Oslo, Norway**

Born out of a passion for adventure and a love of fine and unique objects, Palmyre Living delivers tropical island décor from around the world – statement furniture and accessories, including tabletop, that is colourful and one-of-a-kind. There are napkins from Kim Seybert, serveware from Mario Luca Giusti, dinnerware from Juliska and Herend and cutlery from Sabre.

### On what criteria do you curate products?

Products exclusive to Palmyre and with a colonial traditional look and exotic island influences. I'm so inspired by Oriental/Asian and Colonial art and architecture so I curate accordingly, everything from bamboo-rimmed plates to tropical fruit-coloured glassware. It's been really successful.

### How key is it in retail to have a point of view?

Absolutely essential – you have to stand out, give consumers a reason for visiting. Having such a distinct point of view is probably the reason we do well. It's taken time to change people's décor vision from greys to colour, though; in Norway, people tend to copy each other. But now people are starting to be more daring, to embrace colour.

### From where do you source product?

I attend few shows but I travel the world sourcing product; I have lots of contacts in the design world. Most products are sourced in Asia or the US; very little comes from Europe but that is changing for us. Just this morning I was doing business with a lovely lady in the Philippines – I love the Philippines, they are such talented people.

### What trends are you seeing emerge?

I feel a huge move into Melamine tabletop and thankfully, I love it too. My favourite is Mario Luca Giusti, his colours are so intense. Coloured casual glass is doing well; I love Hans Rottner – think deep colours meets edgy design. In the US, a tabletop with placemats, napkins and statement pieces has been popular for a while but in Europe, it is less so, though it seems to be becoming more of a thing in Europe today... to have more on the table.

### What tableware does well for you?

Juliska, Herend and Alberto Pinto tableware; Sabre flatware and the colourful Melamine tableware from Mario Luca Giusti.







## ***Goulds department store & garden centre***

***Anne Pitman, cookshop and gifts buyer,  
Goulds, Dorset, UK, [www.gouldsonline.co.uk](http://www.gouldsonline.co.uk)***

Started in 1902, Goulds has developed into the premier department store group in Dorset, Devon, in the UK. Goulds offers the latest innovations in home furnishings, including tableware and cookware, as well as gifts, women's fashion and gardening. In addition to opening a catering outlet for busy people, Dorset Kitchen Food To Go, in 2012, the company launched Goulds Online ([www.gouldsonline.co.uk](http://www.gouldsonline.co.uk)) in 2007.

### **On what criteria do you curate products?**

Made In England is important to our customers and we like to support suppliers who are still manufacturing in this country, though customers do still hesitate at the price. Dorchester is still very traditional which is why Portmeirion Botanic Garden tableware remains one of our bestsellers.

### **How key is it in retail to have a point of view?**

I think it's key to have something that makes you stand out from the crowd and for Goulds it is definitely our customer service as we always go the extra mile to make sure our customers are happy.

### **From where do you source product?**

I attend Spring fair and Autumn Fair in the UK and we are a member of AIS so we have several shows a year as well as Exclusively Housewares. Trade magazines are good for keeping up with trends and they also help keep up with what's happening on the cookery programmes on TV. Listening to your customers is valuable as well as they have more time to watch TV programmes and discover the latest gadgets and trends.

### **What trends are you seeing emerge?**

In homewares, Joseph Joseph is still a front runner as it's trendy, it works, it appeals to all age groups and the price range is good. In tableware, apart from Portmeirion Botanic Garden, I'm finding that customers are opting for plain white and pastels; it has to be dishwasher-safe too – customers today want to use their tableware every day, not keep it back for best.

### **What tableware does well for you?**

Tableware is steady as I think people get fed up with the tableware they have and are always looking for something new. We've never got enough mugs in stock; they are very much an impulse buy and customers do like to have a huge choice. Dunoon mugs are particularly good for us but you also need to have a lower price point and the mugs from Churchill China are a good choice as you get a lower price point but also Made In England. Portmeirion's Botanic Garden, Evesham Gold and Sophie Conran for Portmeirion are all performing well because they offer giftware as well as tableware. Denby's Imperial Blue and Regency Green just seems to keep on selling year in, year out. Maxwell & Williams' Basics range and Cashmere Collection and its boxed sets of mugs are popular as they deliver plain white tableware that goes with anything and is dishwasher-safe, so consumers can mix it in with existing patterns and add brightly-coloured mugs for everyday use.

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