

# Gourmet Settings Nabs Design Award



Gourmet Settings has taken home the gold.

It recently won a gold IDEA award from BusinessWeek for a flatware program it developed for Costco. The award, given in the design-strategy category, honors the way the flatware maker addressed Costco's specific needs a warehouse retailer in a cost-conscious, unguided environment in which everything is carefully wrapped up and displayed on a pallet, with very little opportunity for consumers to touch the goods.

The goal, according to Hildy Abrams, president of Gourmet Settings, was to "capture all the processes," from the making of the product to the packaging, display, shipping and other logistics.

The result was "a higher-value product with structurally unique packaging providing full view of all goods; clear, bold messaging; and graphics to deliver a standout contemporary offering."

Gourmet Settings, which collaborates with design partners Hahn Smith Design and Kerr & Co., has worked with Costco in the United States for about three years and with Costco in Canada for the past 10 years. It makes expanded flatware sets and serving pieces for Costco in clearly labeled packages in which the product is set against a colorful background and visible through a plastic sleeve. One sample board is provided so consumers can get a better look at the pieces. But the typical warehouse format allows for very little choice of pattern, so the assortment is extremely limited.

"They are extraordinary editors," Abrams said. "They make a choice, they try to have broad appeal, and they buy it well."

Developing product for the warehouse channel differs from developing product for other channels of distribution, but essentially it all comes down to tailoring an assortment to an individual retailer, Abrams said. "We try to work backwards from our customers' needs."

In winning the gold award, of which there are few, the Canadian flatware company keeps good company with some very large and well-known companies from around the world, a fact that makes Abrams proud.

"I feel good that we are as rigorous and professional as big public companies," she said. ■



Gourmet Settings' "structurally unique" packaging, tailored to the needs of warehouse retailer Costco, won a gold IDEA award from BusinessWeek.