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HOME ACCENTS TODAY

MAY 2022

## 50 SHINING STARS OF RETAIL

*Meet this year's best and  
brightest*







# Retail's best and brightest stars shine

BY THOMAS LESTER

Meet your 2022 Home Accents Today Retail Stars.

Home Accents Today searched the country to find 50 of the best and brightest retailers of home décor and accents. Among them are furniture stores, interior design studios, boutique stores and a few other specialists. Along the way, we received countless nominations from vendors and consumers.

This year's group of Stars is a well-established sort, with 36 of the retailers in business for longer than 10 years. Among those, notables that have been in business for at least 50 years include Chilton Furniture, which has been around since 1885; Oakland Home Store (1940); Mister Robert (1958) and Sunnyland Outdoor Living (1970).

Most of our Stars operate single stores, as 34 only have one establishment. However, HOM Furniture boasts 17 stores while Urban Under-price Furniture and Monroe & Kent each have five stores and Domaci, Interior Illusions, The Kellogg Collection and Oakland each have four storefronts.

Interior design continues to be a major piece of sales, as 41 of our Stars offer design services to customers.

Twenty-seven of our Stars sell online, and the twin titans of Instagram and Facebook continue to be where most of our Stars can be found on social media. Instagram leads the way with 48 of our 50 Stars there, with Facebook just behind with 47 profiles. Pinterest is a distant third with 23 Stars there.

In terms of total sales, 32 of our Stars who responded to this question say their annual figures are \$2.9 million or less. However, five claim sales between \$3 million and \$4.9 million, six are between \$5 million and \$9.9 million, and three have sales figures in excess of \$10 million.

When asked what price points they carry, 49 of the Stars say they offer upper-middle level products. Thirty-nine of them have high-end fur-



The staff at Studio 882 in Glen Mills, Pa., is staffed with trained and educated interior designers who offer free photorealistic renderings to clients.

niture and accessories while 36 of the Stars bring middle price points and 16 have their hands in low price offerings.

This year, we asked our Stars to relay what concerns they have. Forty-two of them said vendor price increases are among their biggest concerns while 29 noted that keeping product in stock is a major headache. Worker shortages keep 21 of our Stars up at night. A few elaborated on big issues.

"Our biggest challenge at the moment is learning how to adjust to our increased sales volume over the last year. Sales are up significantly and managing inventory has become a bit of a puzzle — our stock room isn't large enough to house the backstock of product that keeps rolling in. So,

we've resorted to warehousing backstock off-site and transporting back to the store as product moves out the door," said one Star.

"Material shortages and high shipping costs for furniture, a decline in product quality from some of our vendors, incredibly long wait times for furniture orders to arrive," said another.

Added a third, "There are not enough hours in the day to develop wholesale, private label and online with the demand we are experiencing with brick-and-mortar."

But even in the face of all the issues that retailers are dealing with today, our 50 Retail Stars thrived in 2021 and we expect more good things from them this year and beyond. Turn the page to learn more about them. ■

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## ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS

Huntington Beach, Calif.

Absolutely Fabulous, winner of an ARTS Award this year for home accents stores in the western U.S., carries a full range of price points on gifts from birth to death, religious to rude, cheap to not. The retailer offers a range of interior design services. Product mix includes decorative accessories, tabletop, soft goods, accent furniture, lighting, wall décor and garden.

## ACCENT PRONE

Kernersville, N.C.

Visual merchandising scheme for Accent Prone aims to create a unique retail environment that not only has merchandise for sale but also serves as a point of inspiration and an enjoyable browsing experience. Vignettes encompass a variety of different interior design styles including traditional, bohemian, modern farmhouse, rustic and transitional, put together by staff with backgrounds in interior design. End caps contain accent decor used in the display.

## BARBARA STEWART INTERIORS

Bowling Green, Ky.

Founded in 1952 and located in an historic downtown building, Barbara Stewart Interiors

carries a wide range of products (primarily decorative accessories, area rugs and tabletop) and offers interior design services, which accounts for 50 – 75% of its revenue as well as custom picture framing. Changes its window display every two weeks and bases its interior scheme on current color palettes.

## BEDSIDE MANOR

Chicago

Founded in 1985, Bedside Manor has three locations, in Chicago, Lake Forest and Winnetka, Ill. The bulk of its business is in soft goods, and it prides itself on creating different vignettes with each display bed showcasing different brands and price points, mixing and matching vendors. The store also carries decorative accessories, accent furniture and a smattering of lighting, wall décor and area rugs.

## BEND THE TREND

Greensboro, Ga.

Located in a resort community that attracts visitors from around the world, Bend the Trend acquired new retail space last year which more than doubled its square footage, allowing the retailer to showcase inventory by color and style for an easier customer experience. Offers a "try before you buy" experience which customers love. Also offers interior design services.

## BETH KRUPA INTERIORS

Greenwich, Conn.

Retailer offers a modern gallery vibe with a focus on one-of-a-kind items from around the world in an upper-middle price point. Roughly one-third of its product mix is decorative accessories, another third is soft goods and the remainder encompasses accent furniture, lighting and wall décor. More than 75% of revenue is derived from interior design services.

## BOUNTIFUL HOME

Easton, Md.

Founded in 2000 on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Bountiful Home offers accent furniture, decorative accessories, wall décor and rugs, as well as one-of-a-kind antiques and handcrafted items. Although it initially opened as a furniture and décor store, it later launched a full-service interior design studio and employs five full-time designers. Between half and three-quarters of its revenue is derived from interior design.

## BRIDGET BEARI HOME STORE

Richmond, Va.

Retailer offers an easy, elegant fusion of modern, vintage and artisan décor at various price points. Bridget Beari style is about creating comfort-



2021 was another transformative year for the home furnishings industry. Retailers faced myriad challenges, but you overcame them with a creativity and resilience driven from an unmistakable passion for our industry. Your enthusiasm and confidence were palpable at our winter markets in Atlanta and Las Vegas as you gathered in person again to source for new projects, locations and opportunities.

The 2022 Retail Stars have embraced the challenges of the past few years and are leading the way into a new era in the home furnishings industry. We congratulate you all and encourage you to keep innovating – we can't wait to see what you do next!

— Bob Maricich  
CEO, International Market Centers

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