

NICHE

THE MAGAZINE FOR
PROGRESSIVE RETAILERS



WINNING MOVES

Artcraft Collection Takes a
Chance and Hits the Mark

STYLE THAT SELLS

Bringing Wearable Art
To Your Gallery

- Hot Retailing Tips
- Cool New Designs

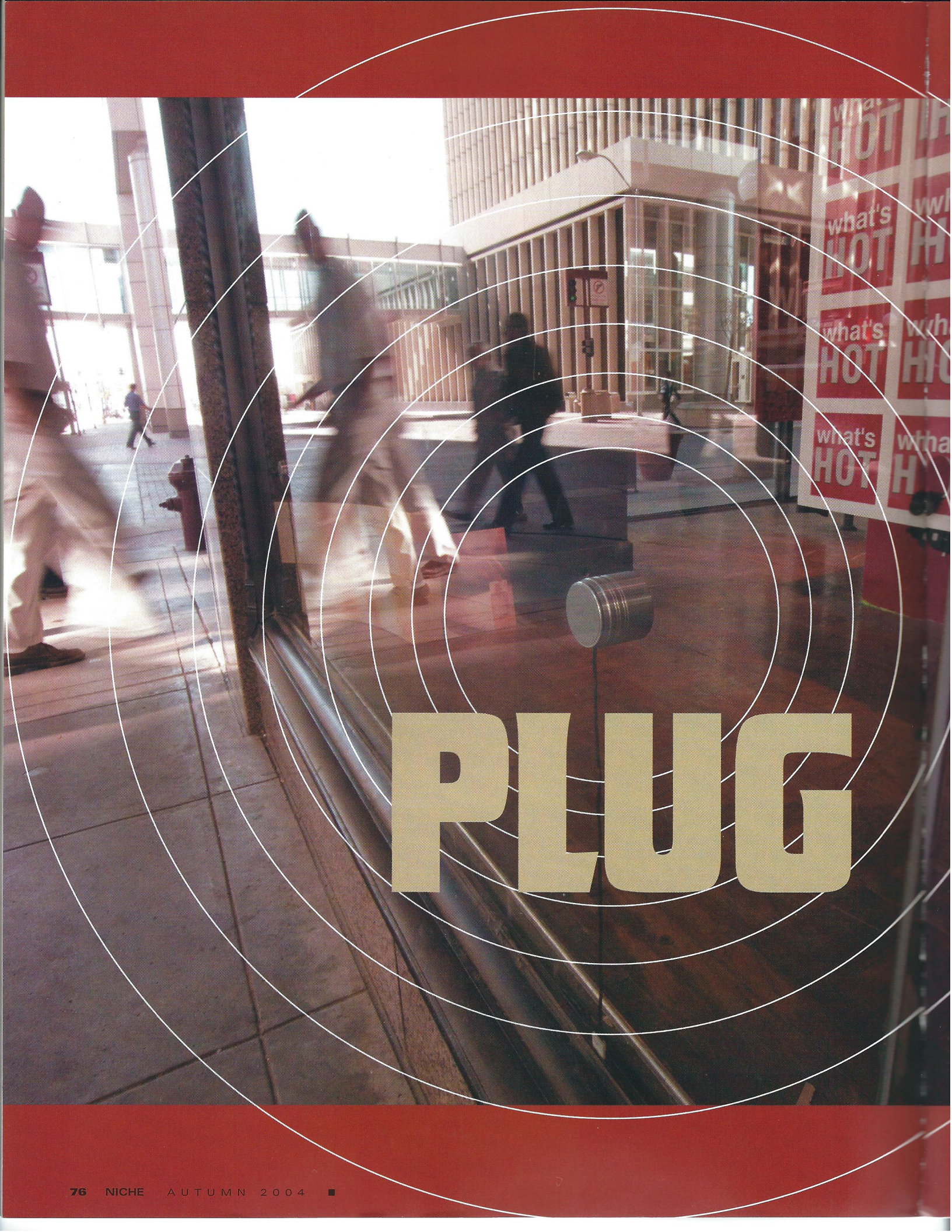
SENSORY IMPACT

Merchandising
Beyond the Visual

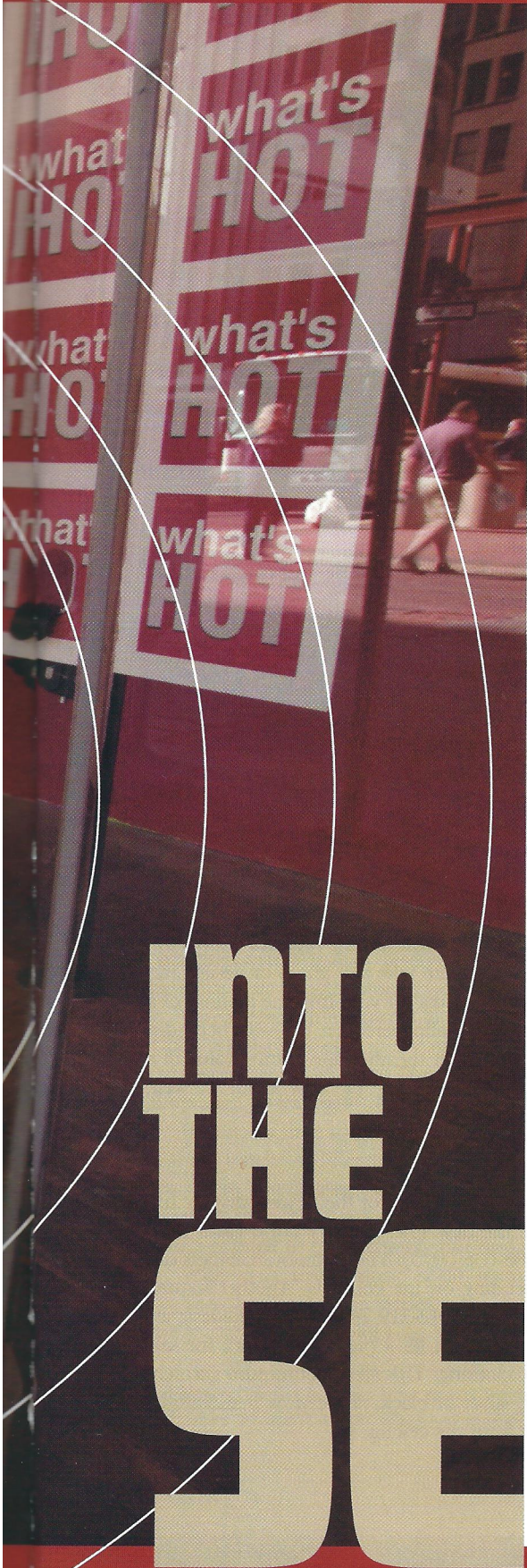
Delving into Interior Design

Can You Handle the
Extra Workload?

NICHE 2004 TOP RETAILERS



PLUG



IT MAY BE TIME

to start saying goodbye to the Zen-like simplicity of the '90s and start thinking "total impact" for your customers. From the floor up, today's display furnishings and accessories reach out to customers, wrapping them in cocoons of sensation. Light, color, sound, texture, dimension—even fragrance—are being used to enrich the shopping experience.

Pulling customers through the door is one of the first challenges, and there are several ways to reach out and grab them right off the sidewalk. Tantalizing them with sound is one option as you turn your display window into a giant speaker. Whispering Window, from **S3i Sound** (800-327-7291), is a small, disk-like device that, when attached to anything solid—a window, a metal sculpture, a wooden shelf—creates an alluring cascade of sound. A talking window will at least have customers looking at your front display, if not venturing inside.

Several music systems are available, including **American Music Environments**, or AME (888-AME-5005), which allows subscribers to choose their own mix of music, down to the specific song if they like. With AME you can also record marketing

A Whispering Window literally turns windows into speakers, using a discreet transducer to evenly distribute sound throughout the surface.

Merchandising display isn't just all about visuals anymore

BY GAEL HANCOCK

INTO THE SENSES

messages to be played in conjunction with the music throughout the store or on the phone for customers on hold. **DMX Music, Inc.** (800-345-5000) is another nationally recognized music provider with programs available via satellite or over the Internet.

Another sidewalk stopper is fragrance. No, you don't need to start baking cookies in the back room. Placing the ScentWave, a scent-distribution system from **ScentAir Technologies** (866-307-2368), near the front door will send smells wafting to the outside and throughout the store. Fragrances include "Green Tea Lemongrass," "Ocean" and "Fresh Linen."



Make Your Own Look

Greet your customers' feet with texture and color. Natural sisal provides a welcoming look and feel, but isn't practical for high-traffic areas. New this year from **DzynSpec** (866-968-3996) is woven vinyl sisal by Bolon. This product comes in 56 colors, styles and stripes and is stain-resistant and easy to clean. Another option, ECOsurfaces commercial flooring, made from 100 percent recycled rubber, is easy on the ankles and knees. This colorfully flecked resilient flooring by Dodge-Regupol is distributed by **Gerbert Ltd.** (877-326-7873). There are 54 standard colors, or you can work with a palette of 29 colors to customize your own flooring look.

If you want to go for major impact, consider image wallpaper. It's no longer just for logos or the sole domain of huge, multi-location chains. **Advent Marketing Results** (888-207-0294), creator of ImageWalls, can take any photo or design and economically create wallpaper just for you. Imagine a photo of a featured artist in her studio wallpapered on the wall behind a display of her work. Or consider the attention-getting value of a piece of glass depicted floor-to-ceiling. Or how about ... well, you get the picture.

Rack It Up

They may not all roll, but many of the newest display fixtures really rock. Take the new line of curvy curio cases from **Dalco Concept Inc.** (888-638-0973). These sinuous cabinets can be sassy or savvy depending on the contents. Another fixture, the "tension form" from **Look** (212-219-2430), is so well-designed that your customers may think it's a piece of artwork for sale instead of a hanger for clothing. This sleek, aluminum garment holder comes in white, silver or black, and can be freestanding, wall-mounted or hung from the ceiling.



A new line of Dalco Concept cases exhibits sense-u-ous curves.

A sense-sational array of new products: ScentWave (left) emits enticing fragrances; ImageWall shows off photos as wallpaper; recycled rubber ECOsurfaces flooring cushions knee joints and feet; Look's sleek "tension form" display offers form as well as function; and DzynSpec's vinyl sisal rug provides texture underfoot along with adding interest visually.

Actually, some of the new display racks really do roll—and the current trend is a bigger, more “puck-like” caster. A new divided shelving unit from **Econoco** (800-645-7032), the folding cube merchandiser from its Sellutions line, not only rolls but also folds completely flat after removing the separate glass shelves.

One of the continuing trends for display fixtures is “mixed media.” According to Mark Bernhard, president of **Bernhard Woodwork Ltd.** (847-291-1040), “we are seeing a lot of metal and wood combinations and moving away from the lighter woods and more into the modernistic look. We’re going back to the ’50s with the darker woods.”

Unexpected Touches

To add color and texture, consider frames for artists' biographies or other information. **Ace Designs Inc.** (215-945-0400) has a bright, geometric frame collection that comes in a range of shapes and colors. Also look to this company for folding easels in black, silver, gold and wood tones. Another possibility is to use a hanging system usually reserved for posters or point-of-purchase materials to hold screens, woven mats or board-backed fabric. Hang these textured pieces like scrims in your front window or behind displays of statuary or glass. The Easyup Magnetic Hanging System from **Rose Displays** (800-631-9707) is a natural for such a treatment.

Finally, it's time to get the silk plants out of storage for the finishing touch. A different option might be canvas palms and plants from **The Canvas Nursery, Inc.** (800-226-3335). With rattan stems, these handcrafted canvas plants can be left natural or custom-painted to complement your design palette.

With visual treats, music, scent, textured displays and floor coverings, you've got the senses covered—almost. Perhaps it is time to start baking cookies. ■

Gael Hancock writes from her home in Las Vegas, Nev., site of GlobalShop 2004, where she asked vendors what's new in retail display.

