

Swannndri and eStar

Working together to deliver brand success

The Challenge

Swannndri was constructing a digital strategy with a purpose to build direct connectivity to Swannndri customers. The strategic plan was a big one and had many moving parts. The first challenge was to find an eCommerce technology that would support these new initiatives.

The Solution

When Swannndri presented the strategy, the eStar team immediately understood what Swannndri was trying to achieve. eStar's experiences with large apparel retailers plus their knowledge of how to translate the Swannndri strategy across the eStar eCommerce technology made Swannndri's decision to partner-up an easy one.

The Results

After the first six months of the new Swannndri site going live, the business impacts of what Swannndri and eStar worked together on became very clear (these numbers are compared against the same period from the previous year):

- Consumer engagement grew by 107%
- Transactions grew by 135%
- Online revenue grew by 160%
- Mobile revenue grew by 2,000%
- Mobile conversion rates grew by 200%

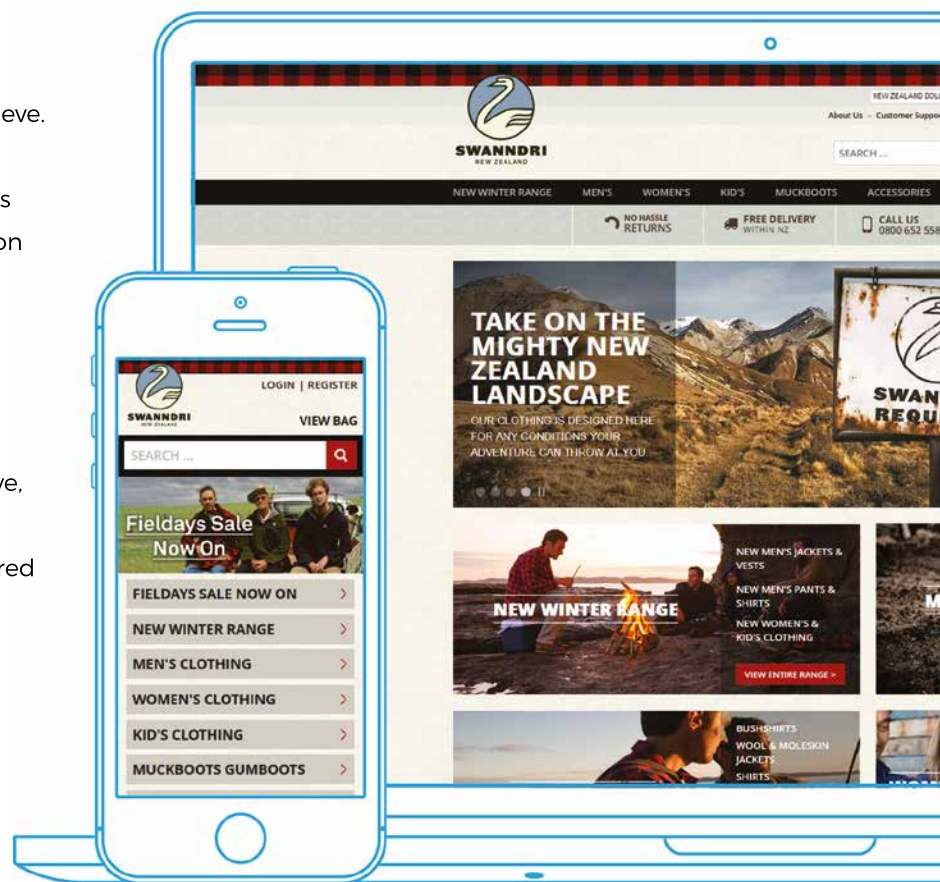
To read the full case study go to www.estaronline.com > Resources

Brand Experience. Delivered Together.

www.estaronline.com AU 1800 503 891
sales@estaronline.com NZ 0800 151 655



“ We went to eStar looking for help in implementing our direct to consumer strategy. They came back with a great offer, access to their design team, and eCommerce functionality to support our strategy. ”
 Angela Lee - Head of eCommerce and Social Swannndri



All things to all people: Kiwi retailers share their omnichannel strategies

First, it was all about bricks and mortar stores. Then retailers had to adapt to online shopping. Now, consumers expect to seamlessly purchase through any and all available channels. Sarah Dunn and Elly Strang asked nine top New Zealand retail specialists how they're addressing demand for omnichannel solutions.

Encouraging omnichannel adoption

Ecommerce platform solutions provider eStar is an omnichannel specialist which works with some of the biggest retailers in New Zealand. Its clients include Country Road, Briscoe Group and Rodd & Gunn. It has experience in implementing click and collect models for retailers, and foresees major growth in this area. Chief executive Andrew Buxton tells us more.



A January report from global software solutions provider CitiXsys accused Australasian retailers of falling behind worldwide standards in omnichannel service. Do you think that's true?

We think some Australasian retailers are mainly still operating their business models in a multi-channel environment. Many still think or behave like their physical store channel is separate from their digital channels, but providing consumers a seamless customer journey across channels is the goal.

Consumers are on a journey to purchase, and that journey is getting longer. In 2013,

Google conducted a study and found on average consumers referenced 12 sources of information online before buying online or in store. In 2010, the average was five.

The vast majority of consumers visit the flagship store as part of their path to purchase, whether that's instore or online. With the increasing awareness and focus that retailers have put on delivering the 'omnichannel' promise over the last few years, eStar is starting to see early adoption initiatives, tried and tested, begin to settle into mature solutions.

In Australasia, click and collect is growing. For example, Harvey Norman claim click and



collect is over 50 percent of online, and when The Warehouse launched click and collect two years ago, it went to 10 percent in the first week, and is now over 30 percent of online sales.

What would you advise a retailer looking to incorporate more omnichannel services into their site? Where should they start?

Talk to eStar! A 2015 study by IDC found that a shopper who buys a retailer's products both instore and online has a 30 per cent higher lifetime value for the retailer than those using only one channel.

The more successful retailers understand technology needs to be iterative in nature. There is no such thing as a one-off build. You must partner with an ecommerce solution partner who shares the same agile development philosophy and can continually deliver and integrate solutions to deliver your brand success. »

Beyond trendy

Hallenstein Glasson needs no introduction. The listed apparel retailer owns top Kiwi high street labels Glassons, Hallensteins and Storm, operating more than 110 stores across New Zealand and Australia. With a well-established click and collect service, plus interesting extras like the “urgent tonight” shipping option, it’s clear that omnichannel is a priority for Hallenstein Glasson. Chief information officer Chris Reid gave us some detail on the strategy.



Can you talk about why Hallenstein Glasson has reacted so quickly to the omnichannel trend?

Hallenstein Glasson has always reacted quickly to trends in the market. I am not sure we can call omnichannel a trend anymore: the term itself is a trend, the ideas behind it are not. We are simply enabling each customer to shop however they deem appropriate. Breaking down the barriers to online shopping is often seen as an omnichannel experience – for example, we enable customers in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch to purchase online and have their purchases delivered same day between 6pm and 9pm in the evening. If we offer this online, why not offer it instore? We show no bias to how a customer chooses to interact with us.

Is Hallenstein Glasson interested in personalisation? Why or why not?

Hallenstein Glassons currently uses a number of personalisation techniques, some subtle, some not so subtle. The key is to use personalisation in such a way that it is not seen as invasive or creepy. We are still very much in the ‘discover and learn’ phases of personalisation – it is something we are constantly discussing and testing.

What’s your opinion on in-store gadgets like beacons and free wifi to track customer movements?

Gadgets are gadgets until they provide a purpose. I love discovering and working with new technology, but we have to constantly ask ourselves, “Is this something the customer is going to want and interact with?” We have free wifi throughout our store network but this is used as a value-add service for our customers. We don’t envisage this technology being used to track the location of our customers. While I like the idea of beacons, I am yet to see them being used in a retail environment effectively.

A big part of omnichannel is an emphasis on offering a seamless experience across bricks and mortar and web. Do you feel like Hallenstein Glasson has achieved that goal across all its brands?

I strongly believe we are a long way down this process, but it is one that will always be evolving. We are extremely proud of where we have got to and are excited for what the future holds in this space. We try to make sure one brand does not surpass the others in terms of its omnichannel journey and, where appropriate, we draw on the scale that we can provide with having three distinct brands in the group.

Natural beauty

The Body Shop is one of New Zealand’s most well-recognised beauty brands, with 28 stores nationwide and a Facebook following of more than five million. Founded in 1976 in Britain, it has built its empire on selling naturally-scented beauty products and having a strong environmental focus. Head franchisee of The Body Shop New Zealand, Barrie Thomas, shed some light on what it’s doing digitally.



Tell us about where The Body Shop is at with omnichannel retail. How are you engaging with this trend?

With 28 stores throughout New Zealand and a range of The Body Shop products available in some pharmacies and in selected Farmers’ stores, we do believe our products are accessible to most New Zealanders, but see that having an online presence is an essential additional service for those customers who prefer to shop that way. Whenever possible, we treat our online store as our 29th outlet and our online promotions mirror those found in our bricks-and-mortar stores. This means we have embraced the omnichannel concept and are well on our way to achieving a true omnichannel solution. It has really just been a natural evolution of our existing systems and we always like to try to stay ahead of the curve.

What are some ways you’re personalising service online?

We already have a unified customer solution giving us the single view of each customer in-store

and online. Now, we have started a number of different initiatives to use buying and browsing behaviour to tweak each customer’s view of the website, and soon we will be able to offer individual promotions if we wanted to.

A big part of omnichannel is an emphasis on offering a seamless experience across bricks and mortar and web. How is your company tackling this goal?

Our omnichannel solution already uses the ‘single source of truth’ for all transaction

history: stock records, customer records, prices and promotions so that they are the same in-store and online. Our goal is to have 100 percent product availability everywhere for everyone, same price, same promotions and we are well on our way to this.

Tell us about the voice your brand uses on social media.

It is important to maintain a consistent brand voice across all aspects of the business. Our story started with Anita Roddick’s belief in

something revolutionary - that business could be a force for good. In 1976, The Body Shop was born. We’ve always done things differently – broken the mould, been bold and been brave. Online this means being original, irreverent and campaigning for what’s right together with our customers. Our voice is approachable, educational, slightly cheeky and quintessentially British. We love our products and sharing the amazing ingredient stories behind them.



Quality basics

When entrepreneur Lawrence Railton launched AS Colour in 2006, he envisioned it as a wholesale distributor of blank t-shirts. It targeted screenprinters and fashion labels, but soon, young customers began to turn up at the warehouse to buy unprinted garments direct. The team saw an opportunity, ran with it, and now sell high-quality, unbranded clothing direct to consumers from eight stores around New Zealand. Retail operations manager NZ and Australia Dan Bycroft spoke with us.

Your website is very thematically similar to the brick and mortar stores, but I can’t see a click and collect option there. Is that in the works for AS Colour?

Due to our company working across both trade and retail, we have steered away from offering a click and collect service for online orders in our bricks and mortar stores as it can cause confusion between the two sides of the business. For example, if someone orders 10 shirts in one size per colour online, there’s a chance their local AS Colour store won’t be carrying enough shop stock to fulfil the order. However, we have a good system of directing any larger order enquiries from retail stores back to wholesale and can even achieve same day pickup from our head office for some Auckland-based orders if they are placed within a certain time frame.

What about other omnichannel services? Are you using any?

Not currently.

Do you ever get customers trying to order from you over social media? How do you deal with that?

We use Zendesk to channel any sales-related enquiries from social media back to our customer services team, which simplifies the process of managing customer requests across various social platforms. We’ve also moved to using Bitly links on all social media so we can better analyse the website traffic generated by social campaigns. In terms of new social media, Snapchat seems to be the most interesting new development and we’ve been watching other brands start to use it in very interesting ways to generate business - for example, using Snapchat to launch new products or limited edition ranges to a more selective database.

Domino’s pizza in the US offers a service called ‘Anywhere’ which allows customers to order from a huge variety of platforms. They can text or tweet Domino’s a pizza emoji; order from their car’s computer, and more. Is this kind of approach a realistic goal for the New Zealand market, do you think?

Multi-platform ordering options have to be a good thing in the long run for any market regardless of size. In fact, New Zealand is probably the ideal place to test new ideas out due to our small population base and geographic size. Retailers have to change and evolve with the needs of their customers or they can easily stagnate, especially when we’re selling basic apparel to a youth market that is so digitally connected. Finding ways to do this is our next challenge, whether it’s a dedicated retail app or another creative digital platform to help with ease of ordering.

Is same-day delivery a goal of yours? How far are you from achieving it? If not, why not?

We do a lot of same-day urgent courier deliveries through our trade business but can currently only achieve this in Auckland where our warehouse is based. Retail demand for same-day delivery has not been strong and we ship most track-pack orders overnight in New Zealand so, generally, an overnight service will meet or exceed most customer’s expectations for online retail delivery. Although with many online retailers starting to offer a same-day option, the expectations could move with the market. If this happens, we’d talk to our courier partner to work out a solution.

Does the idea of drone deliveries appeal to you?

It does, in a slightly scary sci-fi way! Apparel is probably the ideal product to test on drones - it’s unbreakable, easy to package and not too heavy. So, if anyone’s looking for a New Zealand company to test drone deliveries for free, we’d put our hand up!

Getting to 'Yes'

Yesshop is New Zealand's only dedicated television shopping company and the only retailer to rely on television as its primary sales and marketing platform. Its shopping channel is complemented by a website - about half of its sales come through as phone orders, and the other half are made online. The South Korean-owned company expanded into Australia earlier this year. Yesshop's head of media strategy Clara Ng shared the inside story.



Many retailers will not be familiar with television shopping as a channel. Can you explain how your different channels fit together? TV shopping is hugely popular in the European, American and Asian markets. Yesshop has adopted the Korean home shopping model, which has been proven to be highly successful and well-developed.

Yesshop produces live segments here for New Zealand and Australia, which is a unique format of broadcasting that responds instantly to market demand. From the viewers' perspective, this enhances the viewing experience compared to viewing the usual canned infomercial content that we often see on television. There's always a buzz in the studio when we do live segments; the risk of something going awry during live segments is always there and there are no second takes. But we've always been confident with the products that we've picked, and the chemistry between our hosts and the viewers just makes the whole experience a lot more fun and exciting at the same time.

We've heavily invested in our own back office system which integrates back-end platforms - call centre, website and mobile. The in-house call centre operation system ensures our customer service team is aware of what's being broadcasted, translating to easy and simple ordering experience for the customers.

Is there a strong demand from your customers for omnichannel-style services? If so, what have they been asking for? Is any of that specific to television shopping?

We've had customers requesting for more live segments on TV, which tells us that Kiwis do look forward to that fun interaction on traditional TV platforms. That also reiterates the fact that viewers can tell the difference between what we offer and infomercials.

On top of that, we are currently assessing different ways of increasing customer touch-points to respond to customer feedback and enquiries in a timely manner.

There seems to be a lot of customer interaction taking place on your Facebook page. Has anybody ever tried to place an order via social media? If so, how did Yesshop handle it?

We often receive customer enquiries regarding products or vendor enquiries; our customer service and marketing team responds to these questions. If customers request to purchase a product as comments or private message on our Facebook page, the marketing team will redirect the queries to customer services to complete the order.

Our website and shopping app allows users to sign in using their Facebook account. We utilise Facebook's call to action features to facilitate easy access to particular products or pages when shared. We are constantly looking out for new features or functions to make the shopping experience easier such as integrating some features currently on our website with Facebook.

Is maintaining a presence across as many channels as possible a realistic goal for the New Zealand market, do you think?

We are constantly on the lookout for ways to improve our shopper's experience. As a TV shopping channel and an online store, part of what makes up the Yesshop experience is the option of watching the segments on TV or online. The freedom and convenience of browsing and making the purchase easily online using smart devices, smart TV and mobile applications are appealing to us.

We currently have a one click payment system called 'Easy Pay' where registered customers users can make quick purchases without the hassle of re-entering their payment details after registration. On top of that, we have another app in development which is a simplified smart device application where users can instantly purchase products featured on-screen. We are interested in Smart TV applications where shopping using the remote is possible, however this is only achievable if and when there is consensus amongst other industry players.

Digital - it's in their DNA

A home improvement business might seem like an unlikely digital star, but Mitre 10 has proved otherwise. It has become a formidable force on social media, from its 'Easy As' DIY videos on YouTube to its 'show us the results' posts on Facebook. We talked to general manager of marketing Dave Elliott about its omnichannel offering.



Where is Mitre 10 at with its ecommerce offering? Is most of your range available to buy online?

We're progressing well and have made a good dent in our journey. A good bulk of our products are online, but there are still more to go. The sheer scale and variation of our range makes it quite a big job, plus we've still got many 'heavy' items as well as 'see and feel' items that people prefer to buy in-store: plants and outdoor furniture, for example. We've also got ranges that have regional differences: plants again, but also timber.

A big part of omnichannel is an emphasis on offering a seamless experience across bricks and mortar and web. How is your company tackling this goal?

By spending a lot of time talking to our customers and our teams in-store, and through responding to what people are doing. We're continuously looking for insights and seeking to understand our customers so that we can offer what is relevant to them. And in doing this, we take a singular view approach to ensure consistency across all touch points.

What kind of in-store features does Mitre 10 have that strengthen its omnichannel offering?

Kiosks, digital signs, radio, our printed catalogues, Easy As guides and video feeds, plus our Home Improvement and Garden Club offerings. And we work to make these seamless.

What kind of voice does your brand use on social media?

At Mitre 10 we believe we're down to earth Kiwis simply trying to help people improve their homes, and so this is how we communicate with our customers. We're straight talking but friendly, honest and always ready to help out and have a go.

Which is the most important social media channel for Mitre 10 and why?

At this point in time, it's Facebook. And that's because it's where our customers are, and is a place we can engage meaningfully with them.

Gift of the gab

Acquisitions began as a tiny shop selling Trade Aid goods and local craft items out of Dunedin in the 1970s. It has since blossomed into an award-winning franchise of New Zealand gift shops, with 17 stores scattered across the country. Ecommerce and marketing manager Bruce Hetfield delves into what the company is doing online.



What kind of omnichannel services is Acquisitions offering?

About five to six years ago we began a serious effort to intergrate online services into what we do. Since then we've worked hard to build and refine a solid online presence that matches and represents our bricks and mortar presence. In 2014, we won an Omnichannel Retailer of the Year Award in the Top Shop Awards and in 2015 we took the runner-up spot in Otago/Southland. I would say that we take our omnichannel presence seriously and are certainly up there with the leaders.

Is there a strong demand from your customers for omnichannel services?

For those customers that do have an understanding of omnichannel or digital services, I don't know if I would describe it as a strong demand more than I would say it was simply an expectation. Other customers, who perhaps don't have an understanding of omnichannel, are happily surprised when they discover that the store they visit is able to source a product from the other end of the country and then have a custom sale created on our website for them to purchase it and have it delivered directly to them.

Is the experience across Acquisition's website the same as that in its bricks and mortar stores?

We try, as much as we can, to match the level of service we offer in stores to our online services. We constantly reinforce within all staff that they should consider web sales and online enquiries to be just as important as a face-to-face selling. We also keep the standards of gift wrapping and packaging high. We always use new cartons and packaging for web sales in an effort to let online customers know that they weren't an after thought or second best. We also aim to ensure that our branding and tone of voice is cohesive across all physical stores and online platforms.

How does Acquisitions speak to customers on social media?

Early on we developed a brand personality and tone of voice for our social media. We are essentially an entertainment store, so we chose to present ourselves in a personal, witty, somewhat self-deprecating, and often irreverent way. We take gift selling seriously, but we don't take ourselves too seriously. »

What are some ways you're personalising service online?

Some ways we are personalising to the individual user are: Offering payment by credit card, PayPal, POLi (internet banking), and gift card online. This allows more people to be able to shop online with us no matter what your preferred payment method is. Just because you don't have a credit card doesn't mean you shouldn't be able to shop with us.

Creating customised product pages (custom sales) for online customers who might request a specialist item or multiple items, and also in-store customers that perhaps can't find the product they want at their local store is another way we personalise our service. If we receive a customer enquiry and we can possibly make it happen then we will do all we can to make that happen. Also, even though as a rule we don't send overseas yet, we will take each international query on its individual merit and if we can possibly send an item or items to someone overseas, then we will set up a custom sale for international customers too.

We also offer a gift message service where we handwrite a customer's gift message into a gift card to include when the item is for a gift. Another small but personal thing we do is to send out a birthday greeting to our email subscribers (if they've shared their birth date with us - day and month only, we never ask for the year). We also include a link to a humorous birthday video that we change regularly.

More to love

Founded more than 100 years ago, Farmers is one of New Zealand's best-known heritage retailers. It has flourished under conditions which have seen competitors like Wellington's Kirkcaldie & Stains fall, and is now adapting to omnichannel. We heard from Michael Power, Farmers chief financial officer.



Farmers is known for its extensive network of stores across big and small towns in New Zealand. Would you say its regional shoppers are engaging with omnichannel services differently to city dwellers?

As expected, customers across both groups use our online site to research the products they are looking at purchasing and, with our check stock in store functionality, can easily see if the product is available at their local Farmers store.

We can see some differences in the way our regional customers engage with our online offering when compared to our city dwelling customers. In those regional areas, where we do not have a Farmers store in close proximity, we see a higher conversion rate on our website compared to city dwellers.

The Farmers Club card network is very well-established – the customer data they yield must be invaluable for personalisation. Can you tell us some ways Farmers is using that data to improve omnichannel services?

The Farmers Club programme is invaluable to us as it allows us to tailor and personalise the message to our customers. One area we utilise this information in is our email communications.

For instance, we can identify a group of customers who purchase a particular brand, or shop in particular categories and send an email and offer to them that matches their shopping preferences. Customers can then click through from the email to the specific items, brands or offer on our website. This approach allows us to provide our customer with personalised and relevant information and offers.

What's your opinion on in-store gadgets like beacons, free wifi to track customers' physical movements, etc? We see them described as being the equivalent of online tools for the real world, but some people feel they're intrusive.

We are constantly reviewing technology advances that could have a benefit for customers and add value to the customer journey and experience, be it in-store or online. Farmers currently do not use any of the above noted technology.

We understand customers also value their privacy and any decisions to use new technology needs to balance the value add against individual privacy rights.

Is fast delivery a priority for Farmers customers? Does the idea of drone deliveries appeal to you?

The speed of delivery is extremely important to our customers and to Farmers. We understand that once our customers have purchased their items, they expect the item to be delivered as soon as possible. As part of the overall customer journey the last mile is extremely important.

We often receive positive feedback from our customers when we exceed their expectations on the delivery timeframe.

We have not studied drone delivery technology in any detail at this stage.

Double trouble

Founded in 2014, Burger Burger shook up Auckland's hospitality scene with its affordable burgers and shakes and cheeky personality. It has now expanded to include a restaurant focused on ocean-sourced fare called Fish Fish. Kiwis are clearly huge fans, as Burger Burger has amassed more than 40,000 followers across Facebook and Instagram. Co-founder and creative director Mimi Gilmour discusses the company's digital approach.



Last year you said you had a no-queue app in progress called 'Waitless' that would allow customers to log in from anywhere, check wait times for your restaurants and get in the queue without standing in line. How's that progressing?

It's coming along really well! We've been doing soft trials of it in our restaurants and will launch it publicly once it's ready. We have some really amazing advisors from the tech space who are helping us develop it and we are learning a lot along the way. Waitless is its working title, so keep an eye out for the new name when it launches.

Which is the most important social media channel for Burger Burger and why?

All of our social media channels – Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat – are really important to us for different reasons. One of the key things about communicating on different platforms is the need to create unique content that suits the channel it's on. We still might share the specials across all three platforms and when suitable, we also will use one platform to highlight another (such as our Jazzy Jobs videos that we run on Facebook but tease on Instagram) but each of the three outlets also has curated content that has been created especially for it. Day to day, we use Instagram a lot. Being image-driven, it's a brilliant way to showcase our dishes and new specials. We use Facebook to share videos, articles and images that we think our followers will like or find interesting. On Snapchat, we can be really cheeky and have a lot of fun because of its youthful feel.

Are you on Snapchat? If so, what's the benefit of being on there and what kind of things do you post?

We are on Snapchat, which is currently the fastest growing social platform in New Zealand. One of the key goals for our business is to be the most inspiring place for under 25s to work in New Zealand by 2025 and 71 percent of Snapchat users are under 25. It's therefore a really important channel of communication for us. We post everything, from behind-the-scenes videos to competitions. Because Snapchat skews so young, it's a great place for us to showcase our playful voice.

Is there an overriding theme to what you post to your audiences on social media? How is it decided what will work and what won't?

We definitely have a voice and that was developed really organically. We also are really consistent about the style of images we post. However, one of our most successful campaigns that is very close to our hearts is our #regramfromafan. Our company's purpose is to 'Make peoples' lives just a little bit better everyday' and for us, our customers sharing what they love with their friends is just heaven – we couldn't say it any better. When you look at our Instagram, you can see how everything ties together nicely. Aesthetics are important to us but so is genuine content.

Do you ever get customers trying to order from you on social media? If that happened, how would you handle it?

We haven't yet but the benefit of social media is the ability to interact with people. If someone tried to order from one of our social platforms, we'd just instantly respond and guide them to our website for online ordering. That's the other thing about social media – to run it effectively, you have to commit to responding and engaging. **R**