

THE STARS SO FAR...

Six months into 2012, we take a look at which products and suppliers are topping the bill in our Best Sellers feature

This year, we've made a change to our Best of Best Sellers programme and decided, as we approach the half-way stage of 2012, to publish an interim report.

As regular readers know, *Housewares Magazine's* annual Best of Best Sellers report is traditionally published in our December issue, and it's designed as a guide to which products are selling well across the housewares industry.

The report is based on submissions from shops from across the UK. For each issue of *Housewares Magazine*, we ask a number of different retailers for their current 12 best-selling housewares lines. We publish the name of the product, who supplies it and the reason why that participating retailer thinks it's selling well. The number of times each product and supplier is mentioned is then totted up to give us our final results.

As ever, we note that this is not a scientific study and doesn't take into account prices or margins. But we believe that the results –

which so far this year include products from 76 companies – are certainly worth a look for anyone who buys housewares for a retail business.

So, what's the story so far? Well, six months into 2012, the most popular sector is tabletop, which accounts for 22% of mentions. Emma Bridgewater tops the number of hits, followed by Denby in second place, with a host of companies tying for third (Churchill China, Dartington Crystal, Dexam, Le Creuset, Maxwell & Williams and Rayware).

The most frequently mentioned tabletop products are mugs, which make up over a third of our tabletop entries. Not surprisingly, perhaps, Emma Bridgewater takes the lead in the Best Sellers mug list too. Though many retailers merely cite 'half pint mugs' from the Staffordshire company, there are also specific references to Bridgewater's Birds and Jubilee designs.

The number two category is cookware with 18% of all hits and here, Horwood steals the show. In fact, Horwood is way ahead of any other cookware supplier, accounting for just over half of all entries. Kitchenware company Kitchen Craft is second. Horwood's success is primarily down to its Stellar and Judge brands. Its Stellar 6000 range did so well that, if treated as a separate entry, it would have taken third place overall.

Kitchen knives is the third largest represented sector with just over 10% of all mentions. Taylor's Eye Witness leads the way, ahead of Grunberg and Maxwell & Williams. The latter, better known for its ceramics, is making its mark in the knives sector thanks to its coloured block sets.

Bakeware makes a strong statement as well, with 6% of entries. And thanks to the boom in cake-making, baking accessories (such as glitter, sparkles, cupcake cases, cake stands and so on) make up a further 8% of entries. Within bakeware, Alan Silverwood is the top specialist stand-alone brand. It ties for first place in the category with Kitchen Craft (with the latter's Master Class ranges making up the bulk of its successes). George East Housewares (GEH) tops the baking accessories (jointly with Kitchen Craft) which is entirely down to GEH's Tala range which covers icing and piping sets. Culpitt takes third place.

Celebrity chefs seem to be making something of a comeback too (if they ever went away). Last year, only James Martin made much of a mark in our annual Best of Best Sellers. The only other small screen personality to get a hit back in 2011 was Jamie Oliver.

TOP SUPPLIERS

Ranking	Company
1	Kitchen Craft
2	Horwood
3	ICTC
= 4	CKS
= 4	Eddingtons
= 4	Emma Bridgewater
= 7	Dexam
= 7	Le Creuset
= 7	Maxwell & Williams
= 7	Rayware
= 7	Taylor's Eye Witness
=12	Alan Silverwood
=12	Denby
=12	GEH
=12	Grunberg
=12	Kuhn Rikon
=12	The DRH Collection

This year, however, Best Sellers include Raymond Blanc cookware by Anolon from Meyer, Ching He Huang's collection from Rayware and two entries for Michelin starred chef Heston Blumenthal (the keynote speaker at our recent Houseware Conference): kitchen knives by Grunberg and thermometers by Salter.

The overall winner of Best of Best Sellers will, of course, be revealed in the December edition of *Housewares Magazine*. For the past few years, that accolade has been scooped by Kitchen Craft. Therefore, it comes as little surprise that this company is headlining our 2012 Best of Best Sellers at the half-way mark. In fact, in the first six months, it has accounted for exactly one in eight (12.5%) of all entries with quite a healthy lead on second-placed

TOP SUPPLIERS BY SECTOR

Ranking Company

Bakeware

= 1	Alan Silverwood
= 1	Kitchen Craft

Cookware

1	Horwood
2	Kitchen Craft

Kitchen Knives

1	Taylor's Eye Witness
= 2	Grunberg
= 2	Maxwell & Williams

Tabletop

1	Emma Bridgewater
2	Denby

Baking accessories

= 1	GEH
= 1	Kitchen Craft
3	Culpitt