



H.A.G. IMPORT CORPORATION (Australia) Pty. Ltd.

INTRODUCING H.A.G

H.A.G is a forward-thinking, privately owned Australian company that designs and distributes some of the world's most recognised homeware brands, including Maxwell & Williams, Casa Domani, Krosno and WOLL.

Celebrating almost 60 years of success, H.A.G is now behind some of Australia's most trusted brands, well known for designing high-quality and affordable homewares. H.A.G's brand suite covers a broad range of sub-categories with extensive collections built to suit the gamut of time spent in the home.



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FROM HUMBLE
BEGINNINGS TO AN
INTERNATIONAL
SUCCESS STORY,
H.A.G CONTINUES
TO SOAR.

Maxwell & Williams

BACKGROUND

H.A.G

The history of H.A.G begins with Harry Grundmann and his wife Anna, starting with a simple business idea, and beginning operations from the family garage in 1963. Harry's son joined the family business and following his father's retirement in 1978, Max Grundmann partnered with his favourite customer, mentor and friend, William Ryan, to continue to grow the business.

H.A.G expanded, turning international brands Krosno and IVV into household names in Australia. The next challenge was to maintain success in an ever-growing and increasingly competitive market. In July 1996, Max and Bill created and launched Maxwell & Williams, now one of the most recognised brands in the Australian homewares market.

H.A.G. transformed from a small importer to the owner of one of Australia's pre-eminent homewares brands. It has a reputation for importing and designing only the best quality products and continues to maintain and build on this status globally.





MAX GRUNDMANN

H.A.G Managing Director and CEO

Max Grundmann matriculated from Melbourne High School in 1964 and went on to study economics and law. Throughout his university education, Max had numerous part time jobs in hospitality and sales, from assistant waiter, hamburger maker, to porter, lift driver, door-to-door salesman and even lifeguard!

Max set about learning about life and life's experiences. His abundant enthusiasm and fun loving attitude together with a flair for economics signalled that sales and business were more suited to his personality and ability. He joined his father, Harry, in his wholesaling business, recognising H.A.G. Import Corporation as an opportunity to be seized.



With a natural aptitude for sales, Max quickly tuned in to the changing mood of the homewares market.

Overseas buying trips taught the Grundmann men about advertising, branding, packaging and price. Anna Grundmann's appreciation of quality and style had been an ever-present influence and Max was soon a passionate advocate of the importance of the quality and price value equation.

When Max and Bill Ryan took over in 1978, the partnership flourished and the business grew rapidly under the direction of the new team. Their partnership was the cornerstone on which the business stands today, with core values of honour, integrity and partnership at the heart of it all.

After Bill's retirement in 2021, Max took full ownership of the business, continuing the family business with both his sons in key management roles.

60
COUNTRIES

500
RETAILERS

60M+
TURNOVER

HAG



DISTRIBUTION GROWTH

In July 1996, homewares history was made when H.A.G launched the Maxwell & Williams brand. In the 26 years since Maxwell & Williams products hit retail stores, it has become one of the most recognised brands in the Australian homewares market.

H.A.G designs and imports high quality products that meet the needs of contemporary households and has earned a reputation for having an innate understanding of a broad range of consumers.

H.A.G continues to grow in the category both nationally and internationally in over 60 countries and over 500 retailers, resulting in revenue of over 60 million annually.

HEADQUARTERS VIC, AUSTRALIA

The H.A.G headquarters in Melbourne is made up of over 70 employees across a purpose built warehouse and office space. The current headquarters has been developed with an architecturally designed showroom to showcase all core and seasonal collections in an aspirational way for retail customers to experience.

An open plan workspace encourages collaboration between eight key departments, with fully equipped meeting rooms situated throughout to accommodate both internal and external meetings.

Last but not least and inline with the passion points of H.A.G's brands, is an impressive industrial kitchen, bar and entertainment area - frequently used for events for our retailers, creative partners and staff.



Warehouse Space



Office Space



Showroom



Entertainment Space

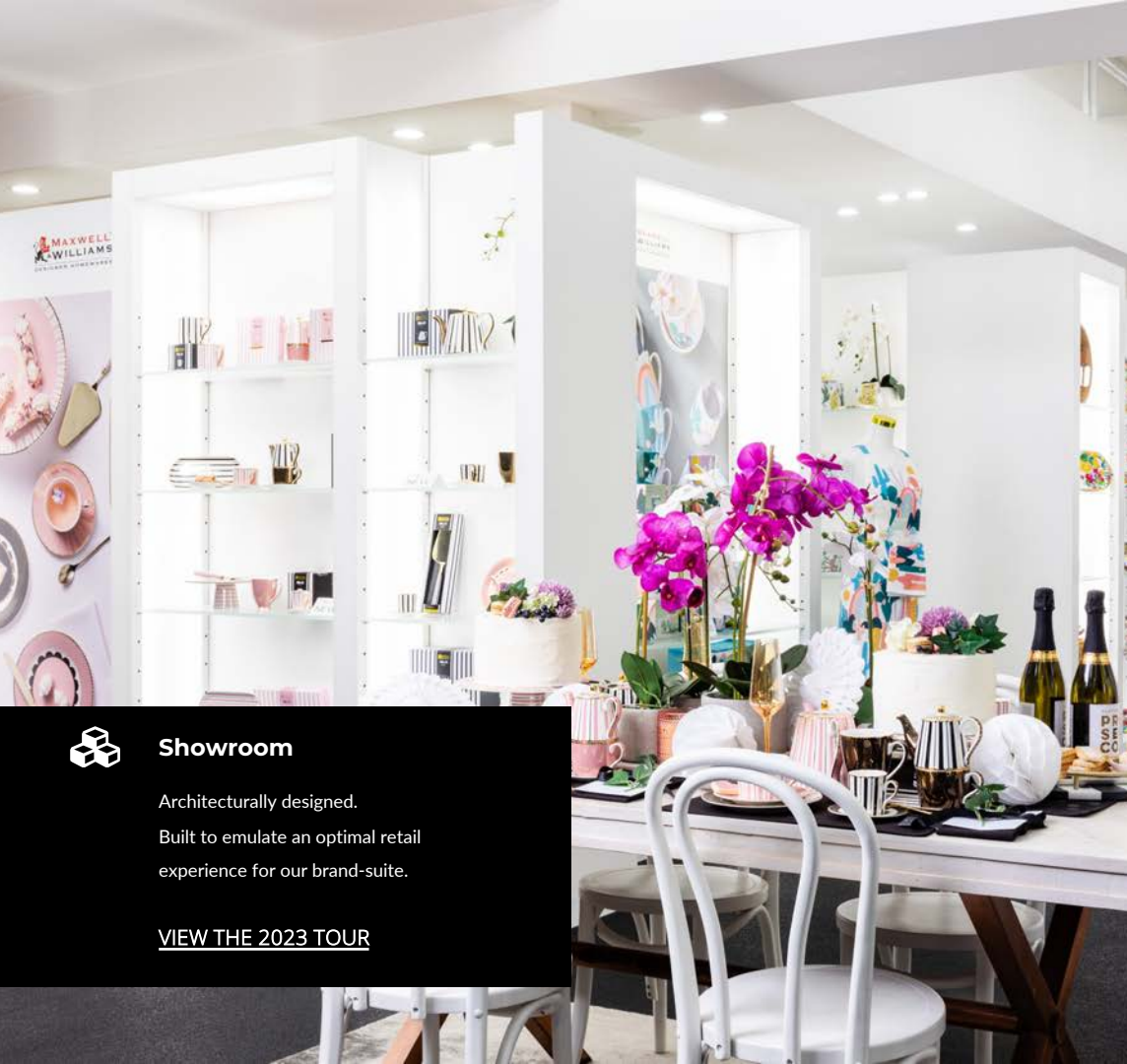


Warehouse Space

24,000 sqm H.A.G warehouse space with on and offsite storage capabilities.

Latest technology to dispatch in volume.



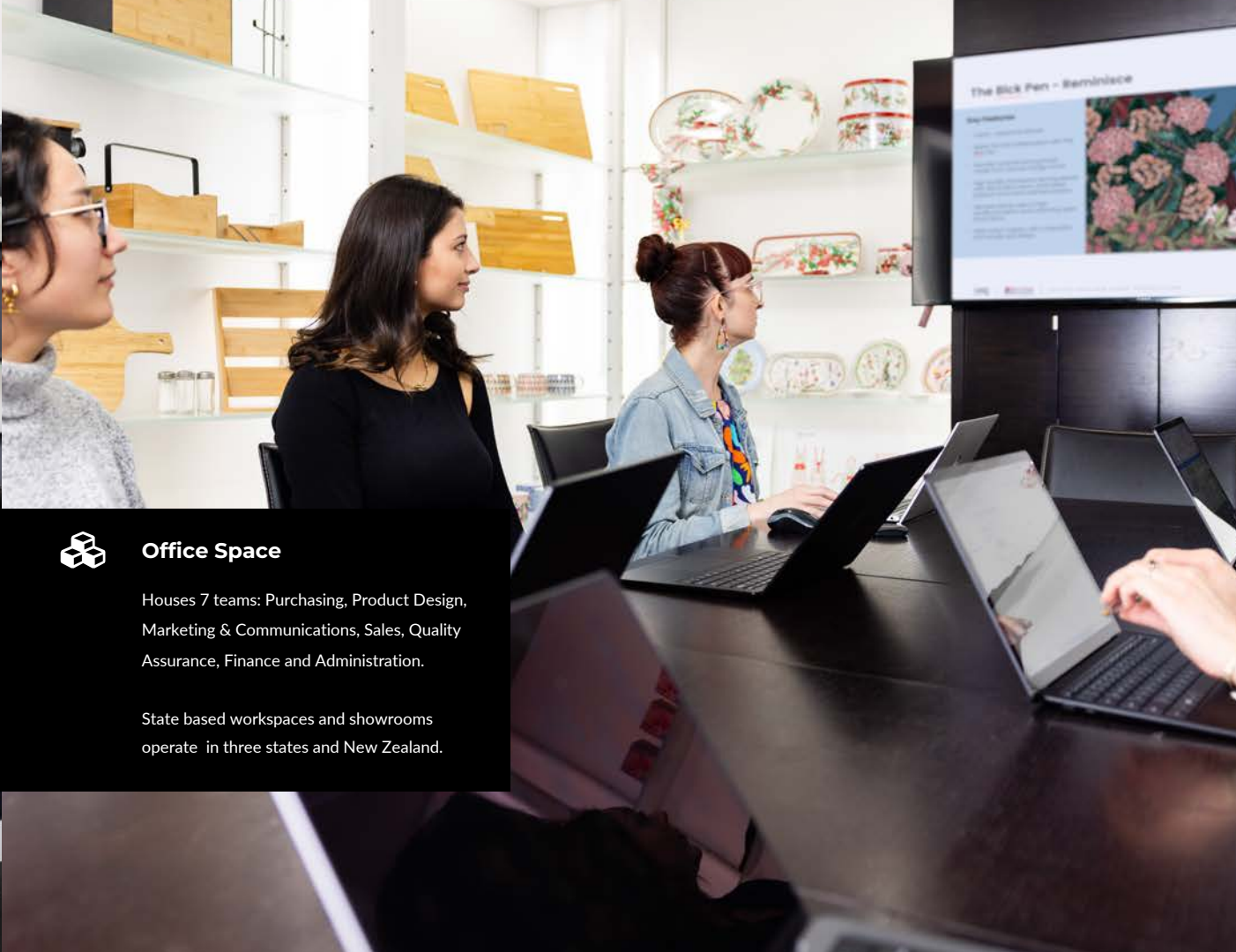


Showroom

Architecturally designed.
Built to emulate an optimal retail
experience for our brand-suite.

[VIEW THE 2023 TOUR](#)





Office Space

Houses 7 teams: Purchasing, Product Design, Marketing & Communications, Sales, Quality Assurance, Finance and Administration.

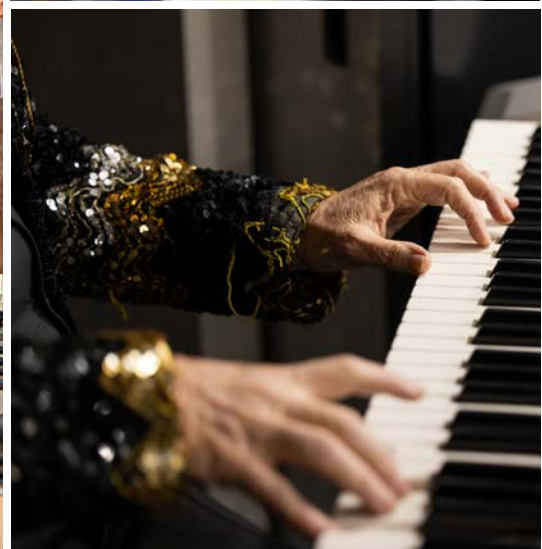
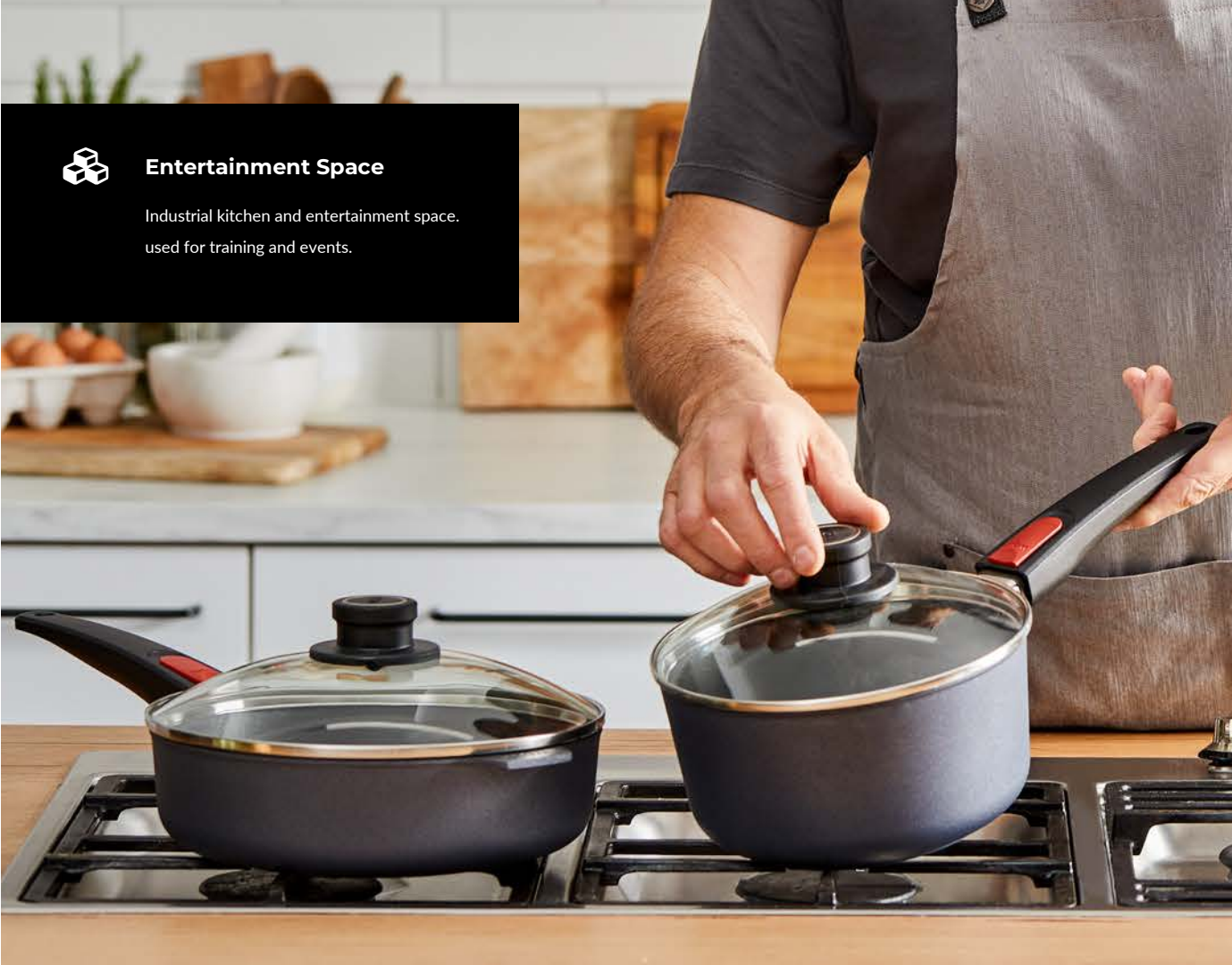
State based workspaces and showrooms operate in three states and New Zealand.





Entertainment Space

Industrial kitchen and entertainment space.
used for training and events.



LEADERSHIP TEAM 2023



MAX GRUNDMANN
Managing Director and CEO



DANIEL GRUNDMANN
Director of Sales



MICHAEL GRUNDMANN
Head of Sales Strategy

LEADERSHIP TEAM 2023



IRENE KUAH
Financial Controller



NICK MOUSSIADES
Head of Logistics



KELLY TUNBRIDGE
Head of Product



MELISSA GIULIANI
Head of Marketing

WAREHOUSE AND LOGISTICS



voice recognition technology

A real time, paperless picking solution for warehouse employees.



telescopic conveyor system

A system that unloads shipping containers to the processing area to dispatch, inclusive of a manual system for quality assurance. It also offers boom unloading of semi-trailers



flexible storage options

including bulk pallet racking, drive-in racking, long span shelving and carton live storage – repack areas.





HAG
BRANDS





Make it Memorable

Maxwell & Williams, Australia's favourite homewares brand, holds true to its promise of exceptional design, quality and value. From the table to the kitchen and beyond, there's a Maxwell & Williams piece for every occasion, with thousands of options to discover and enjoy.

Whether you're moving into your first home, having a quiet night in, hosting a dinner party, BBQ or birthday celebration, the moment is made by you, and for you, with Maxwell & Williams.

Making Everyday Extraordinary

WOLL's mission is to bring inspiration and innovation to foodies everywhere by producing extraordinary cookware in the pursuit of perfecting the art of cooking. It believes in elevating the "everyday" above the ordinary.

WOLL is therefore positioned in the market based on its quality workmanship, its German provenance of manufacturing and the professional results it delivers.

Saluti! Welcome to our table.

The Casa Domani tabletop brand possesses an ownable aesthetic firmly rooted in alfresco and Mediterranean dining styles. The collections are focused around textured finishes, muted palettes and pieces built around a shared approach to mealtimes.

Casa Domani represents the warmth and spirit of relaxed dining — summer sun, fresh air and a beautiful table shared with good food and loved ones.

Famous Australian Style. Famous Polish glass.

Krosno creates superior glassware, embodying exquisite quality and timeless design.

H.A.G is proud to be the largest wholesaler of Krosno glassware outside of Poland, and to have a brand synonymous with brilliance.

Krosno designs are beautiful yet functional and are built for everyday life.

BRANDS IN-MARKET

01. Media Outreach

02. Social Media

03. Influencer and Artist Partnerships

04. Brand Ambassadors

05. Digital and Print Campaign Bursts

06. Out of Home Advertising

07. Television



CAMPAIGN EXAMPLES



WOLL TVC



[LINK TO WATCH](#)

WOLL AMBASSADOR

Widely regarded as one of the country's top chefs (and a former Gourmet Traveller Chef of the Year), Martin Benn is renowned for his innovative approach to gastronomy. With an extensive background in fine dining establishments, he rose to fame as the co-owner and chef of Sepia in Sydney.

Benn's exceptional talent lies in transforming ingredients into stunning, harmonious dishes that blend traditional techniques with modern creativity. His dedication to pushing culinary boundaries and delivering extraordinary dining experiences has solidified his status as a visionary chef on the global gastronomic stage.



KROSNO CAMPAIGN EXAMPLES

Examples of digital and print
creative for the Krosno brand

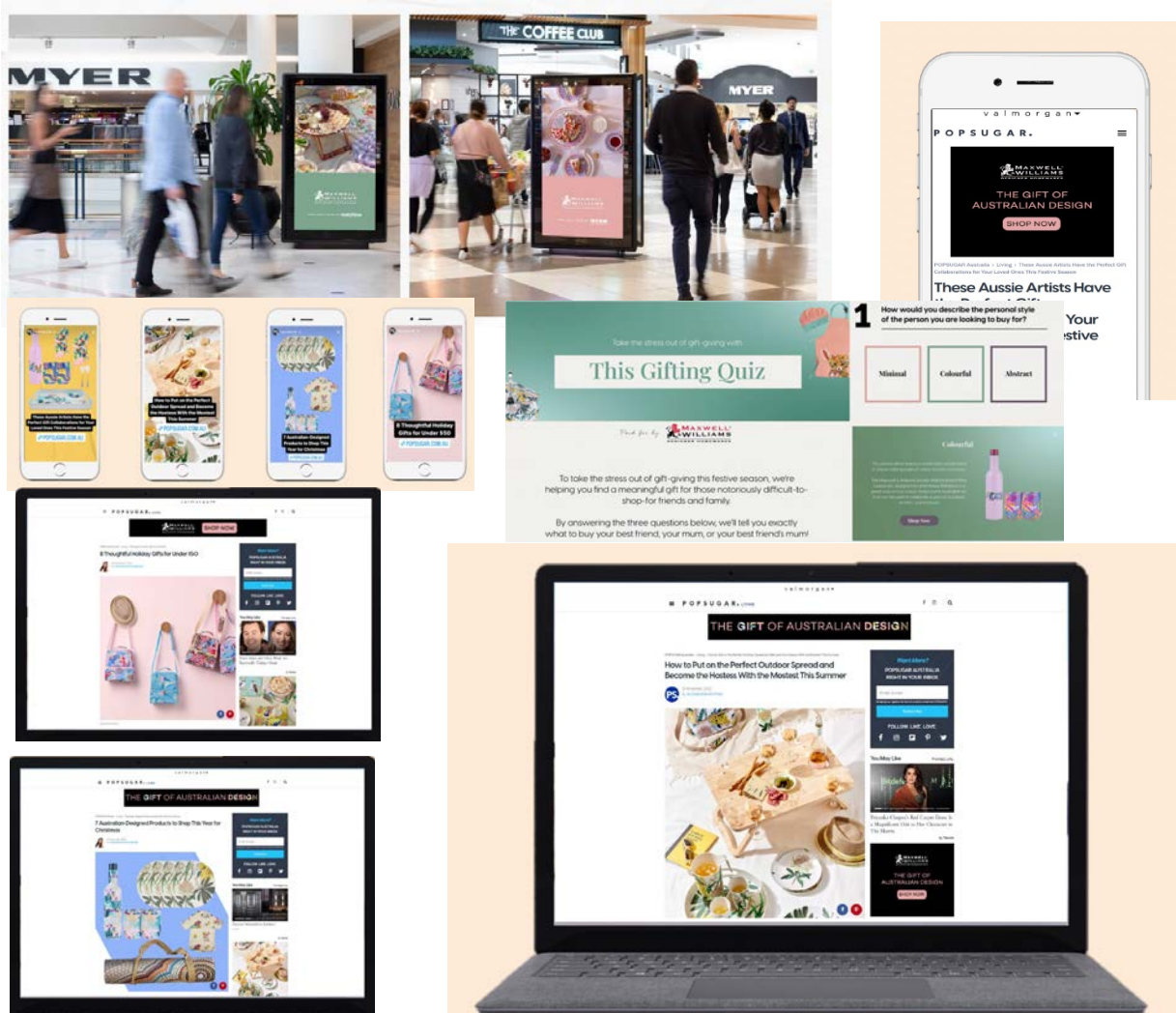
- Krosno stands for brilliance in glassware and its Polish heritage
- the collection in part continues to be handmade using traditional methods
- Contemporary styling cues show a youthful take on traditional glassware



MAXWELL & WILLIAMS CAMPAIGNS

H.A.G has a long history of supporting the Maxwell & Williams brand, investing in sponsorships as well as print and digital media.

Owned, earned and paid channels are activated with high quality creative to engage and resonate with the core Maxwell & Williams customer.



MAXWELL & WILLIAMS POS

Our support for our valued retail network takes many forms, one of them being to provide usable, adaptable and buildable POS elements that can be used to attract and educate customers along the journey to the point of purchase.

COLLECTION A5 STRUT CARDS & BASES

(as per your order) These are to be used with and inserted into the Maxwell & Williams wooden base block. **Feature next to respective collections in your store**



DOUBLE SIDED WOBBLERS

These should be used with Cocktail and Co. product. Low tack adhesive strips are included to affix to shelf. **Min 2 sides displayed at shelf**



POSTERS A3, A2, A1, A0

Print-your-own (organise via your H.A.G Sales Rep)



SMALL WINDOW



MEDIUM WINDOW



LARGE WINDOW

MAXWELL & WILLIAMS EARNED MEDIA

Established relationships with print and digital publications ensure steady earned media coverage in market for new launches, Maxwell & Williams brand collaborations and push products for gifting.



The Australian Women's Weekly



ENTERTAIN

Serve in style at your next gathering with the Everleigh range of cups, cocktailware, coasters and napery from Maxwell & Williams. Designed in Australia, this affordable, pretty range is a lovely gift for Mother's Day or for yourself! From \$2.95, maxwellandwilliams.com.au

Domain



Canberra Weekly



home beautiful



The Advertiser



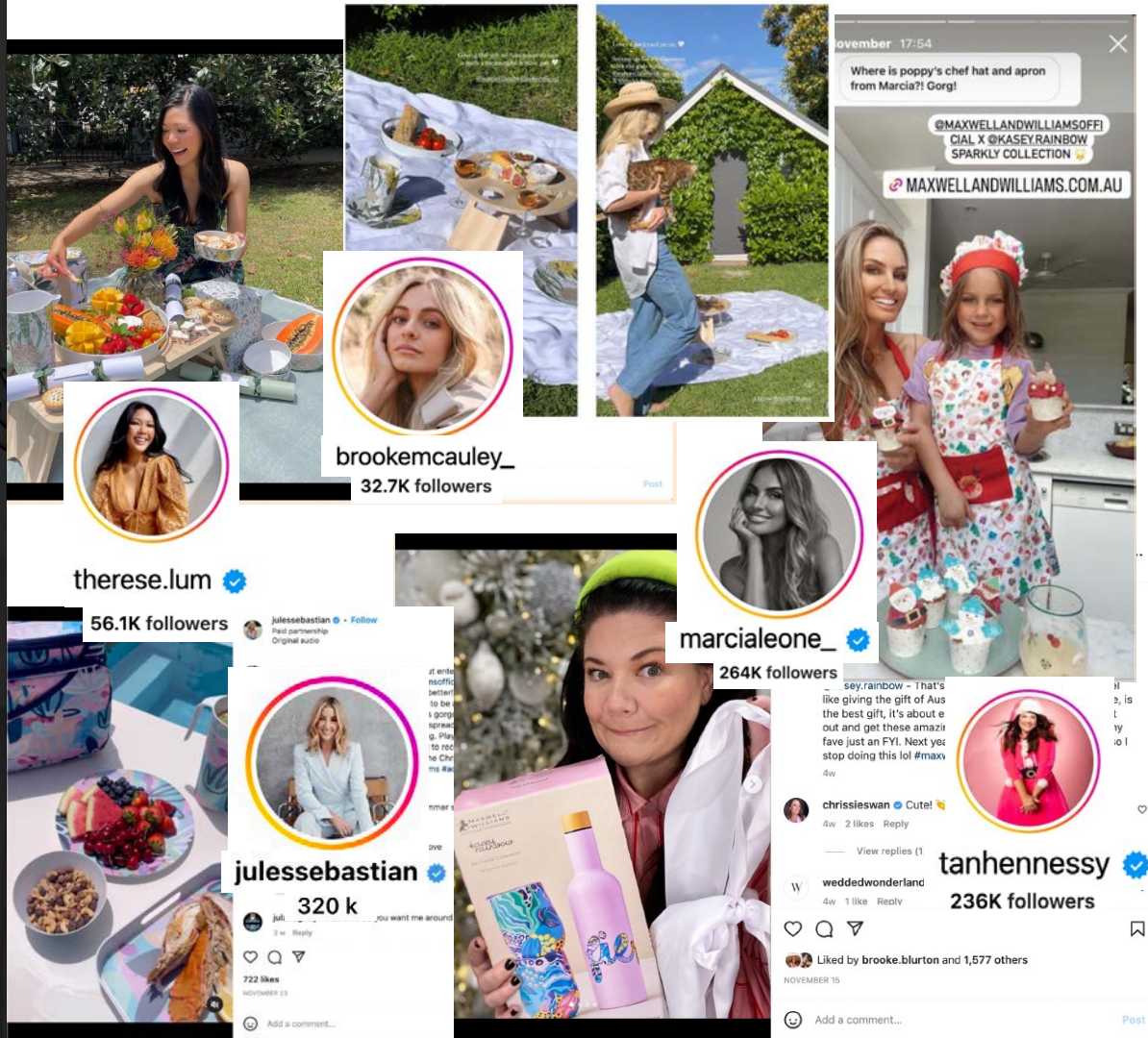
taste magazine



MAXWELL & WILLIAMS INFLUENCER ENGAGEMENT

Social media Influencers are considered as a part of specific campaign activity to engage new and existing audiences via socials. Partnerships are established based on brand fit, quality of content, as well as following and engagement levels.

Influencer content aims to inspire a moment that resonates and to showcase how to use key Maxwell & Williams collections in a personalised way.



MAXWELL & WILLIAMS SUPPORT OF AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS

Maxwell & Williams has a 13 year history of partnering with emerging and established artists to create unique collections infused with true passion and individual style. These colourful collaborations appeal to a wide and varied market.

H.A.G sets out to engage artists with a specific point of view and a passion for seeing their art re-interpreted as everyday items that enhance homes around the world.



Rach Jackson



Gabby Malpas



Nathan Ferlazzo



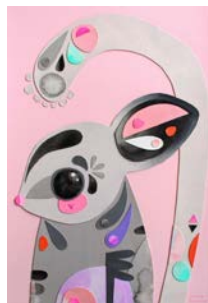
Estelle Michaelides



Donna Sharam



Katherine Castle



Pete Cromer



Neha Gupta | 'The Blck Pen'



MAXWELL & WILLIAMS SUPPORT OF AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS

"As a proudly Australian brand with a truly unique flavour of Flair that's Fair, the idea of supporting Australian designers and artists, is at the heart of our DNA."

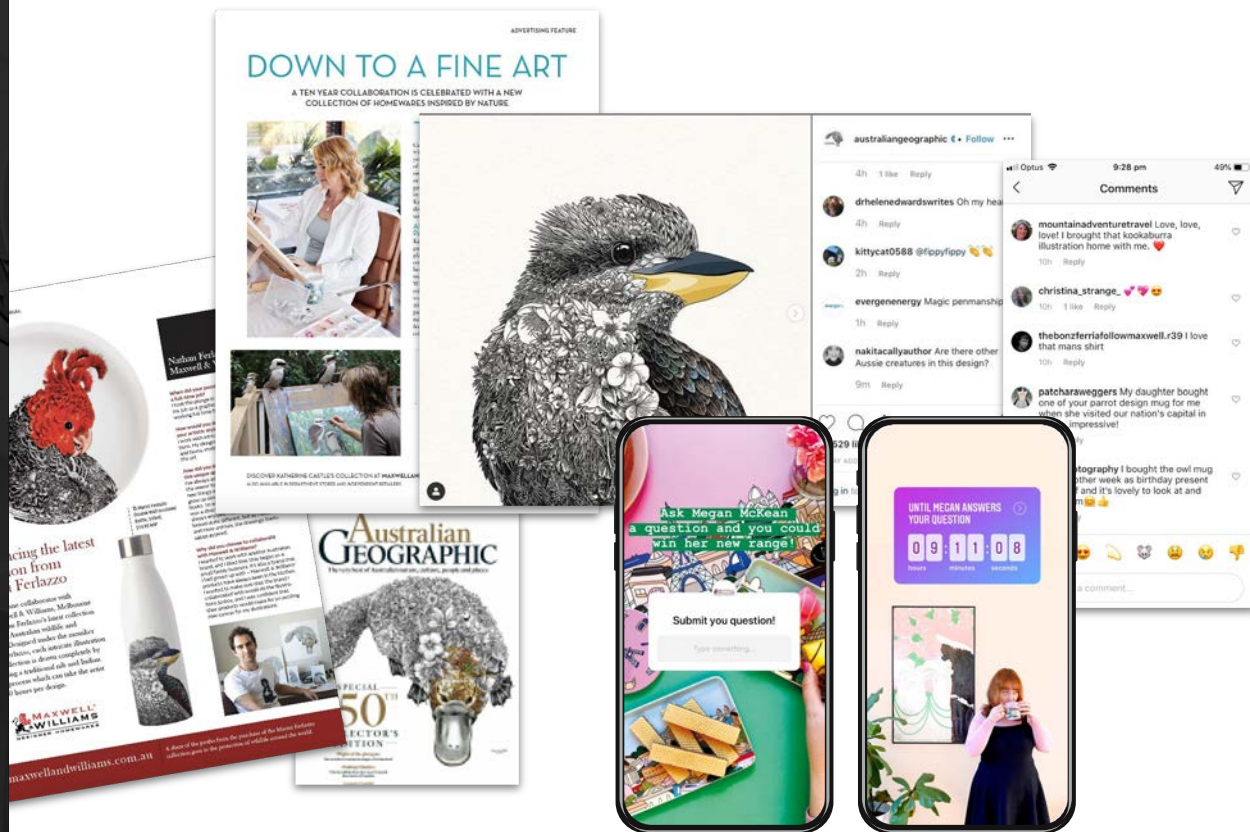
The Maxwell & Williams philosophy and passion for promoting great aspirational designs, functional products at affordable and reasonable prices, combined with the unique talents of our Australian artists and designers results in an authentic brand which resonates with our Australian consumers and also with consumers world wide."

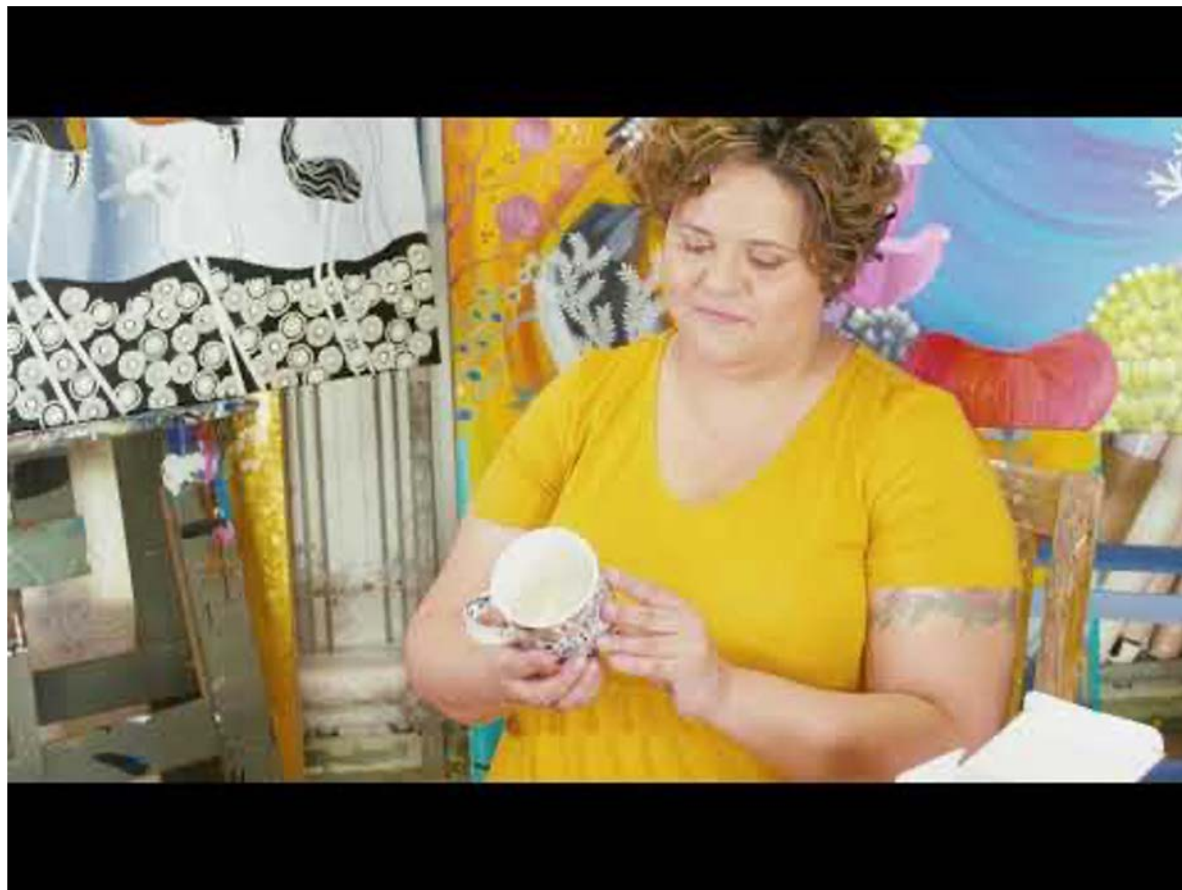
Max Grundmann, CEO



MAXWELL & WILLIAMS SUPPORT OF AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS

Campaign and owned channels are used to amplify our artist partners' profiles and collection launches.





[LINK TO WATCH](#)

RETAIL PRESENCE

- 01. Established retailer partnerships
- 02. High-end packaging
- 03. Select bespoke fixturing
- 04. 'Shop-in-shop' approach to department store format
- 05. Window Displays
- 05. Australia-wide merchandising team



RETAIL PRESENCE



MYER CASE STUDY

58 SHOP IN SHOPS NATIONWIDE IN MYER DEPARTMENT STORES

Partnering with longstanding Australian department store - Myer, H.A.G has successfully rolled out 58 'shop-in-shops' for Maxwell & Williams within the homewares department - creating an aspirational shopping experience for the brand in key destinations Australia wide. The success has been further driven by increasing the breadth of range per store, alongside inspiring graphics and video content to give context to seasonal releases.

Woll and Krosno branded fixturing was rolled out in 2021 resulting in a tangible sales uplift.

The shop-in-shop initiative continues to perform Year-on-Year, solidifying H.A.G's powerful partnership with Myer.













**CORPORATE
PUBLICITY
ARCHIVE**



Tuscan sojourn that inspired Maxwell & Williams empire

In 1996, Max Grundmann was doodling on a paper tablecloth in an Italian trattoria in the Tuscan capital of Florence when an idea came to him that would change his life.

By DAMON KITNEY



HAG chief executive Max Grundmann's renowned homeware products are distributed widely around Australia in Myer department stores and other speciality retail shops, and in more than 60 countries worldwide. Picture: Aaron Francis

In 1996, Max Grundmann was doodling on a paper tablecloth in an Italian trattoria in the Tuscan capital of Florence when an idea came to him that would change his life.

Inspired by sharing several bottles of fine Chianti wine with his fiancée Kath to toast their Italian sojourn, he jotted down a name for a unique porcelain range of homewares being sold by his family's Melbourne-based importing business, HAG Imports.

It was a combination of his full first name and that of his business partner, William – better known as Bill – Ryan. That afternoon the brand name Maxwell & Williams was born.

This fateful piece of paper now sits framed on the front counter of the HAG offices in the Melbourne industrial hub of Brooklyn at the foot of the West Gate Bridge.

Today Maxwell & Williams (M&W) products are distributed widely around Australia in Myer department stores and other speciality retail shops, and in more than 60 countries worldwide, including Canada for the past two decades.

In June this year the now 96-year-old Bill Ryan retired and Max – also a lifetime Collingwood supporter and a former owner of the North Melbourne Giants basketball team – took full ownership of the M&W business.

With HAG's global selling footprint, Max now has ambitions to make it a \$1bn enterprise which could even one day be listed on the Australian Securities Exchange. His two sons to his ex-wife, Michael and Daniel, both work in the business.

"There is only one thing that is absolutely perfect in this world. That is mediocrity. The reign of mediocrity is extraordinary. So you don't have to be that good to be exceptional. That is the reality," he says.

"When Bill and I became partners we agreed our success was pretty much guaranteed. Not because we were that good, but because the competition was that bad."

The amicable negotiations for their separation took 18 months, assisted by another intriguing piece of M&W written history.

"We actually had a document which was prepared by the lawyers in 1978 about a separation. But we never signed it," Max says with a wide smile.

Bill joined HAG in 1978, combining his expertise in finance with Max's prowess in buying and selling.

"He stuck to his knitting and I stuck to mine and we trusted each other. We had what I call experience sessions rather than recrimination sessions when things went wrong. Experience is what you get when you didn't get what you wanted," Max says.

"Our relationship has always been cordial and friendly. But there was such a big difference in age and perspective. And he was very frugal; I am not. His frugality came from his life experience and my philosophy has always been that you only get one life."

Starting from nothing

Max's parents, Holocaust survivors Heinrich (Harry) and Anna Grundmann, immigrated to Australia from the Greek port of Piraeus in mid-December 1952 aboard the migrant ship "Cyrenia", an old Greek vessel built in 1911.

The ship stopped initially in Fremantle in Western Australia before Harry and Anna travelled on to Melbourne.

After working as a salesman, Harry – with only \$700 in the bank – started HAG, named from combining his and Anna's initials. The company began life in a small garage at their home in Clinton St in the bayside Melbourne suburb of Brighton East.

"I'm very, very proud of the fact my parents started something from nothing," says Max, who turned 75 this year.

He left Melbourne High School in 1964 and then studied economics, politics and law while working as an assistant waiter, lifeguard, hamburger-maker, porter, lift driver and door-to-door salesman.

He joined his father's business as a junior salesman in 1974, its fifth employee. His father was then head salesman and his mother handwrote HAG's invoices.

"Dad was a commercial thinker who got it. Mum had fabulous style and taste. Not that she had the money ever to express that, because the family were refugees. The most fundamental thing Dad taught me was you can't buy integrity so you better not give it away. So it is not possible for me to do things in the business that would destroy their integrity. That has always been a huge lesson for me," he says. In 1978, his father suffered a heart attack and stepped away from the business to recuperate. Max and Bill Ryan – who he called the company's "favourite customer" – became joint managing directors.

HAG came to acquire the exclusive Australian distribution rights to household names such as Casa Domani tableware and world-renowned Polish glassware Krosno.

Philosophical thinking

As part of his political studies at university, Max studied philosophy. He says this taught him to think in a way that has made HAG completely different to its competitors.

"Most people come at things from the product side; I come from the strategy and philosophy part. My thinking is completely different," he says.

For example, he says while many in business see advertising, marketing and communications as a cost imposition on a business, Max sees it as a "super fund".

"Business is the organisation and management of specialisation. That's it. It is not about making a profit. When you tackle things from that perspective, it changes the way you think," he says.

"Specialisation achieves the benefit of improving productivity and capability. The idea that business is ever at someone's expense is an impossible idea. The strategy in our business is I am responsible for the benefit received by every stakeholder. Because everybody needs to receive the benefit they should."

He says the values of HAG are expressed "in the way we do things".

"No stakeholders will be cheated or disadvantaged from the factory to the consumer," he says.

"We need to make great product that is affordable, fashionable, functional and we do it because we care. We have a passion about it and we are not going to let anyone down. That is what we do."

 **THE
AUSTRALIAN**



With HAG's global selling footprint, Max Grundmann now has ambitions to make it a \$1bn enterprise which could even one day be listed on the Australian Securities Exchange. Picture: Aaron Francis

On the wall of HAG's head office boardroom is a plaque with a famous quote from legendary Walmart founder Sam Walton.

"There is only one boss: the customer," it reads. "And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman down simply by spending his money somewhere else."

John King was appointed Myer chief executive in June 2018, and on his fourth day in the job he visited Max at HAG's offices. It was a first for a Myer CEO and the idea of M&W setting up in-store shops in Myer was born.

In 2019, Max took that deal to a new level when HAG severed its ties with David Jones, which since 2014 has been owned by the listed South African retailer Woolworths Holdings.

That same year, before the onset of the pandemic, Max also had his first meeting with a Myer chairman, then Gary Hounsell.

M&W now runs 60 in-store outlets in Myer department stores. Max said last year he expected his Myer sales to top \$30m in 2021, up from the \$12m they fell to in 2017.

Playing ball

In July this year HAG also took over the Australian distribution rights for Woll Cookware, a cast-aluminium brand that has been manufactured in Germany since 1979.

Max says the opening order was worth almost €2m (\$3.15m), a figure the brand had never achieved before in Australia.

He still wears the championship ring of the now-defunct North Melbourne Giants as a reminder to "never to buy a basketball team".

He was a board member and then subsequently chairman of the club at a time when basketball was growing rapidly at both the grassroots and elite levels in Australia.

But despite winning the NBL championship in 1994 and being runners up the following year, Max and his fellow owners were unable to make the business viable.

"We tried everything to no avail. The financial losses were massive, the fallout was devastating and I will never forget the experience," he now says.

But two experiences during that period stand out among the darkest of his life.

The first was on a Sunday morning in late 1995 ahead of an emergency meeting of the NBL board where they were set to cancel the Giants' NBL licence, which would have severe financial consequences for Max and his family.

Before he went to the meeting, he warned Kath that their beloved Mercedes was likely to soon be replaced by a bicycle.

"Her answer was unequivocal and spontaneous," he recalls. "'Just make it a bicycle built for two,' she said. I'll never forget the beauty and power of that moment. That commitment to our love and relationship was just super. It was extraordinary and under the circumstances almost made the whole episode worthwhile."

The second experience came not long after, when Max had to finally advise the team's players at meeting at its Olympic Park headquarters that he could no longer single-handedly financially support them and was putting the club into administration.

Lessons in leadership

At the time he was talking to a number of prospective buyers for the franchise and to keep a deal alive, he needed the players to stay with the Giants.

They included league legends and Olympians such as Mark Leader, Larry Sengstock, Pat Reidy, Ray Borner and Paul Rees.

"I told the players the devastating news and made it clear that we could not offer them contracts because we were in administration and the only way we could be sold was if they stayed," Max recalls saying.

Not one player left the room. For Max, it was a show of spirit and solidarity the likes of which he had never seen before.

"The feeling of disaster had been replaced by a feeling of exhilaration. Though the end was still nigh, hope existed and made all the difference. The rest is history: the club was merged but sadly still did not survive the difficult business of basketball at that time," he says.

Max recalled the story during a 2015 speech he made to the students of Melbourne High, 51 years after he graduated. The staff and students gave him a standing ovation.

He told them that the ups and downs of life and leadership were obvious and inevitable. They could be both uplifting and soul-destroying, he added, telling the students they had the choice to take up the mantle of leadership or to decline it.

"However, life without leadership means progress is impossible. Progress demands change and taking the lead means taking the risk. The question now is: are you up to it? Are you willing to take the risk?" he asked.

"Many say 'Life is what you make of it'. But I say 'All of life is what you make it'. So do you want to learn how to make that difference? You can learn to be a leader and the starting point is now! I implore you to dare to be what you can be."



"We can't allow this to go on, our lives our livelihood our mental health, are all dependent on not having lockdowns and giving us the degree of immunity necessary to control it."

"It is a race and let's get it done fast."

Max Grundmann

*Interview topic:
Could this be
Australia's answer to
beating COVID once
and for all?*



Watch full video [here](#) – Max Grundmann on 60 minutes Australia. Max features at 15:18-17:53 & 23:52-24:25

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Neil's Cruise for the Kids 2022

Be part of the collaboration of Melbourne icons to raise funds for The Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal

Hosted by Melbourne's very own **Neil Mitchell** and top AM station **3AW**, this incredible event has raised over **\$1 million** since its launch in 2018.

How does it work?

Fundraisers need to raise a minimum of **\$5,000** to be "released". In previous years this has been at the Melbourne Star Observation Wheel but with the closing of the Wheel, Neil and the team are taking on the Yarra with a Melbourne River Cruise Boat!

On the day.

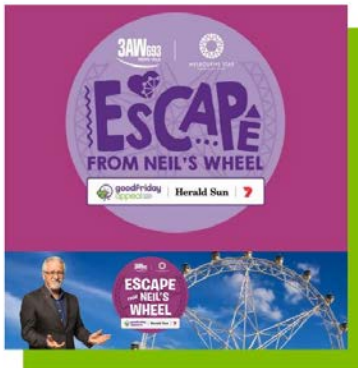
Every hour from 8.30 - 11.30am our participants from leading Melbourne businesses & organisations are held "captive" on the Boat. Neil interviews lead participants from each business before and after their stint, as well as chatting to on air callers donating to release their chosen organisation's "imprisoned" team!

There are many opportunities to amplify your participation through promotion on air and across both 3AW and Good Friday Appeal social media channels.

By getting involved you will be joining hundreds of thousands of Victorians who year after year dig deep to Give for the Kids. Thank you for helping to make a real difference to the lives of sick children.

Please contact The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation, Corporate Engagement Manager, Kate Dear, on 0466 314 713 or kate.dear@rch.org.au to register your interest to participate.

To see how it unfolded in 2021 please click [here](#)



*Image from 2021

March 11
SAVE THE DATE

\$5,000
THRESHOLD



goodFridayappeal

Herald Sun



Feb 2022



Today we offered up our fearless leader, MAX GRUNDMANN, to take part in the 3AW Neil's 'Cruise for the Kids' down the Yarra as a 'prisoner' and he was not to be released until we raised the minimum \$5,000 in donations.

Thanks to the support of the H.A.G community, we have managed to raise over \$44K!

Max shared with 3AW's Neil Mitchell "I went along to the hospital for a visit and I was just astonished, here were these McDonald's Meercats and magic of hope and beauty and inspiration for kids and I just couldn't believe what I saw. I then said, I am going to become a supporter of The Royal Children's Hospital."

During the interview, Neil touched on Max's competitive side and shared with his listeners that Max refused to get off the boat until Maxwell & Williams raised \$50K. Unfortunately, Max had to get off the boat, but we still have a little way to go, and we need your help.



Daniel Grundmann and Max Grundmann, Good Friday Appeal 2022



Max Grundmann: "there is no question about Myer's survival"

25 February 2019

1 Comment



4 / 5 free articles left.

Homewares company H.A.G Imports, which supplies Maxwell & Williams and Kresno to Myer, has been named its Supplier of the Year.

C-owner Max Grundmann came to the defence of the department store at Myer's award ceremony in Melbourne.

"There is no question now about Myer's survival," he said, following a year-long attack on Myer by retail powerbroker Solomon Lew.

"The question now is only how dominant will Myer be. This is the new Myer, an organisation with integrity of spirit and purpose for every stakeholder.

"They care about us, the supplier, as well as they care about the customer. Guess what? If you don't care about the customer, you certainly won't care about your supplier."

Myer CEO John King said his custom-first strategy relied on suppliers.

"Myer's partners play an important role in delivering our Customer First Plan. From the supply of high quality and exclusive brands to the provision of services that enable us to

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MAX GRUNDMANN & WILLIAM RYAN MAXWELL & WILLIAMS



Under the brand names MAXWELL & WILLIAMS, CASA DOMANI and DOOZIE, Max Grundmann and William Ryan import and distribute porcelain, glass, stainless steel, cutlery, giftware and homewares throughout Australia. Internationally, these brands are distributed through a unique business model in more than 10 countries including NZ, South Africa, Israel, England, Canada and Germany. Yet this hugely successful business began its life rather humbly as H.A.G. Wholesalers, set up in 1963 by Harry Grundmann and his wife in their garage. As the business grew, the Grundmann's son Max joined the company as a sales representative, subsequently purchasing 50 per cent of the company from his parents. In 1978, Harry retired, selling his 50 per cent of the company to William Ryan.

Max and William began working as partners, and throughout the 1980s and early 1990s H.A.G. rapidly grew in size, with annual sales reaching \$12 million. In the mid 90s, Max and William began to face substantial competition from price focused operators which threatened the continued success of their business. They realised that consumers were becoming more concerned with price and convenience, and less interested in the old, powerful and more expensive brands. Turning adversity into opportunity, Max and William decided to revitalise the market segment completely with the launch of a new homewares' brand incorporating their own first names.

In 1995 the MAXWELL & WILLIAMS brand was conceived and the brand strategy developed. In 2004, sales of MAXWELL & WILLIAMS products grew to almost \$50 million, making it a household name not only in Australia but all around the world. In just the last three years alone, business profit has climbed by over 600 per cent.

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5 secrets

Maxwell & Williams' homewares co-founder, Max Grundmann, shares his tips for a stylish festive season



Max Grundmann
shares his tips for
entertaining.

1 Plate, set, match

The fundamental thing about entertaining is to make the table speak the same language as the occasion. If it's a casual barbecue, look for more relaxed and decorative settings, such as hand-painted plates – we have some great selections in our Casa Domani range. If it's a more formal dinner, serve on white, square-shaped plates – they have an expression of sophistication.



2 Organise early

I just love entertaining, but when the guests arrive it's vital that you're not running around in circles trying to get things prepared. The way to make any social gathering work is to have all of the planning and preparation done beforehand, so that when people arrive it seems, as if by magic, everything is already done. My partner, Kath Giles, is the world's greatest planner!



3 Keep it real

My approach to food, life and decorating is to be as natural as possible. Nouvelle cuisine is not my bag, Italian food speaks to me more – it's cooked from the heart – there isn't a dot here and a stripe there that's meant to be food.

4 Set the place

Place settings are crucial – how you mix people at a table can affect the way the party goes. If you've got six people it makes no difference, but with more than 10 you should think about where you seat them. You may want partners sitting next to each other, or you might separate two people who you know don't get along. It takes a little thought, but it's all a part of the planning process.

5 Cook for a crowd

We've just launched a new range called Microtozen, which makes cooking for a crowd easy. It features tagines, lasagne, casserole and quiche dishes; bakeware and ramekins. It's very resilient – microwave- and oven-safe as well as non-stick – and very affordable.



H&G SHOPPING

How to shop for... STEMWARE



Quality glassware that complements the wine you're serving is a clear winner, says Max Grundmann.

WINE FIRST A wineglass delivers the aroma and flavour of wine; it's the conduit to the experience of enjoying wine. No matter which style you like to drink, you need a glass that will enhance your wine's attributes.

INTO THE RED Big, bold varieties, such as shiraz, require a larger wineglass that can handle and highlight their fullness and power. Because of the generous size of their bowl, our Krasno shiraz glasses help release a wine's aroma. Once the aroma is released, the wine grows in body and complexity. So the bigger the glass, the better those heavier reds will taste.

Lighter reds, such as pinot noir, also need to 'open' to maximise flavour, but don't need to be served in such large glasses.

WHITE RIGHT White wines don't have the intense flavour and aroma that reds do. If you put them into a glass that's too big, you risk losing some characteristics. A white wine needs to be served in a glass with a bowl that's smaller and taller, to funnel the delicate aroma upwards.

BUBBLY PERSONA Champagne is almost always associated with a party or special occasion. I personally think flutes that accentuate the look of the bubbles are

superior. But if you're going to use a coupe, look for a style with a deep bowl and long stem to enhance the effervescence of Champagne. We used Maxwell & Williams hollow-stem coupes in this shot; they set the festive mood perfectly.

WEIGHTY MATTERS When shopping for wineglasses, it's important to check that they feel balanced. When you pick up the glass, it should feel right in your hand. You don't want wineglasses to be too heavy, because then you don't get a true sense of the weight of the wine. Drinking wine is a sensory experience, and part of your response is a reaction to how it feels. Some people believe heavy lead-crystal glasses give a better drinking experience but I'm not of that opinion. I think that if the glass is too weighty, you lose some of the authority of the wine.

IF IT AIN'T BROKE Personal preference is key. Choose glasses you love and that will complement your tableware. Fashion may dictate that coloured glass is in vogue but I'm not in favour of a wineglass you can't see through. You lose some of the wine's persona. Likewise, stemless glasses do suit alfresco dining but I'm not a fan. The design of wineglasses has been perfect for centuries. I don't think we need to mess with it.

DAILY ENJOYMENT Having a set of wineglasses for special occasions doesn't make a lot of sense to me. You can buy glasses of the same shape and capability at hugely different price points that will deliver the wine in exactly the same way. Most of the time, the difference to taste and flavour is zero. You don't need to spend a fortune. Wineglasses should be for every day, because every day is a special occasion.

Max Grundmann is managing director of wholesaler H&G Import, which supplies some of Australia's best-known homeware brands, including Krasno and Maxwell & Williams.

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WHAT'S TRENDING / AT HOME / AROUND TOWN / DEFINED

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THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF HOW MAXWELL & WILLIAMS BECAME AN AUSTRALIAN ICON



Meet The Man Behind Maxwell & Williams

Max Grundmann is a busy man. His passion for life means there's no such thing as pause. H.A.G. is the business behind brands like Maxwell & Williams, Krosno, and Casa Domani, and the Ritz-Carlton presence in Australia.

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Harry and Anna Grundmann

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