

# REA

RETAILER EXCELLENCE AWARDS

GIFTS & DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES

Gifts and Decorative Accessories announces the finalists for the 67th annual Retailer Excellence Awards—the most longstanding and prestigious retail awards in the gift industry!

Get to know the nominees, then join us for the gala celebration on Sunday, August 12, at the Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers in New York City.



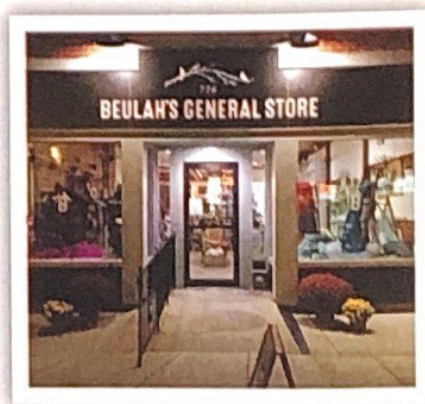
# Nominees for Store Design/Redesign

A store's visual appearance sets the tone and mood for its shoppers. These three finalists for Store Design/Redesign know their customer base and created an engaging layout that tells the store's own unique story.

## Beulah's General Store

Located in historic East Aurora, N.Y., Beulah's General Store was designed to reflect its location's history. "After peeling back the many, many layers, we discovered beautiful wooden plank walls, original brick chimneys, and charred beams from a fire that occurred in the 1970s," said Heather Sprague of Beulah's. "After doing my own research, I learned of a woman in the early 1900s who owned her own retail store and was so far ahead of her time as an entrepreneur and community leader. Her name was Beulah Hood...so the store name was born."

The store's design, which highlights the original beams and other features, pays homage to its town's history. "This project is truly a dream come true, paying respect to a strong, independent woman of our town's past," Sprague said. With a feature wall made of reclaimed windows and a library ladder reaching the ceiling, its creative design adds distinct character.



## Bluecashew Kitchen Homestead

Positioned as a "culinary think-tank," Bluecashew Kitchen Homestead, located in Kingston, N.Y., is an experimental space fostering exploration of gourmet subjects and techniques. The store, which has a full demonstration kitchen, allows shoppers to interact with the culinary tools on sale, as well as watch or participate in classes, chef demonstrations and "kitchen take-overs." The entire store design is structured around engaging customers and creating a memorable experience.

In addition to the kitchen area, aprons and swatches hang from an upcycled cross-piece from a 1900s telegraph pole, while glassware is displayed on shelves between two salvaged Victorian posts. The overall look and feel is certainly unique.

## Greeks Bearing Gifts

In July, Jim and Patti Greek, the owners of Greeks Bearing Gifts in Athens, Tenn., were awakened by the news that their block was on fire. Their store, which had been built in 1867, miraculously withstood both the fire and water used to extinguish it, but the community was devastated.

"The building where it started was totally destroyed," Patti said. "The Chamber of Commerce beside us was floating in water and has been condemned. The furniture shop behind us lost two walls."

After the ashes settled, the two redesigned Greeks Bearing Gifts into an uplifting environment. The ceiling, for example, was painted an ice blue to resemble a bright sky. "To have a devastating fire like this really set back our wonderful small town...many people for the next several weeks asked the local papers and area TV stations to give updates on when we were going to open. On our opening night, Nov. 30, we had over 500 guests in our shop!"

