



— 1965 • 2015 —  
LES PROMOTIONS ATLANTIQUES INC.  
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*To Jacques Gatién and his family.*

*« The best reason to start a business is to create meaning, to  
create a product or service that helps to improve the world »*

*- Guy Kawasa*



**NOTE TO THE READER:**  
For the sake of simplicity, we will sometime use the API abbreviation to denote Atlantic Promotions Inc.

# Foreword



This souvenir album was not written with the intent of recounting the comprehensive history of Atlantic Promotions. We will leave that challenge to the biographers and historians of this world.

The purpose motivation intent of this book is to outline the events and milestones that have accentuated our company's journey.

For some, it will be an opportunity to remember the flagship products, the powerful advertising, or the anecdotes that have shaped our corporate history. For others, it will offer an opportunity to discover the entrepreneur that is Jacques Gatien as well as provide an insight into the company's development since its very beginnings.

But for those of us who have worked on this project, it is meant to be testimony to the achievements of the great Québec entrepreneur and innovator, Mr. Jacques Gatien.

Louise Gaudet, Lynda Daunais, Dixon Alderson and Gilles Gosselin

Longueuil, September 2015.

# Thank you !



Jacques Gatien has always surrounded himself with colleagues who, in their own way, contributed to the growth and prosperity of our company.

In this memoir, we have chosen to recount only the most important facts and mention only the partners who were with us at the beginning without mentioning other names, unless essential to the story.

We wish, however, to sincerely thank all of those who, over the past fifty years, have teamed up with Jacques Gatien and contributed to the success of Atlantic Pro-motions.



# Preface



Dear Friends,

It is with great honour and friendship that I would like to join, the staff and management, and in particular Jacques Gatien Sr., in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of Atlantic Promotions Inc.

Only a few companies ever reach this stage, and thanks to the entrepreneurship of Jacques Gatien, the company has maintained its mission despite major structural changes in the business arena. We need only think of the disappearance of Steinberg, K-Mart, and Pascal, and the arrival of Walmart, Canadian Tire and Best Buy, and more recently Amazon, Alibaba and other e-commerce giants.

Competence, anticipation, innovation, humanism, and the desire to serve the customer are the values that Jacques Gatien and his team embrace.

My best wishes for continued success are with you.

Jacques, thank you for the confidence and the loyalty you have shown me for over 45 years.

Marc Bourgeois  
Dentons Canada



Arm in arm, Jacques Gatien's parent on their wedding day.

## The Early Years



The young Jacques in 1946 (8 years old).



First day at school with Mommy and Daddy.

The person who would become the founder of Atlantic Promotions Inc. was born on Canada Day, July 1st, 1938 at the Hôpital Sainte-Jeanne-D'Arc in Montreal.

His father, Adonias Gatien, and his mother, Ida May D'Arcy, had married a year earlier in the parish of Saint-Stanislas de Kostka in Montreal.

After completing his primary schooling at the École Ludger-Duvernay de Rosemont, he pursued classical studies at the Collège de l'Assomption. He was a student there from 1950 to 1953. During this period, his talents as an actor and a speaker flourished.

He took on several roles in plays staged by the Collège, and distinguished himself in intercollegiate debates.

He then took a business course at Collège Saint-Laurent de Montréal. Two of his classmates, Pierre Marcotte and Serge Bélair, would go on to become well-known personalities in Quebec television. Showing a keen interest in business, the young Jacques subsequently enrolled in evening courses in accounting and business administration at Institut Alie in Montréal. He also participated in various business-related conferences.



First Communion.



The young Jacques, the "big" winner of an intercollegiate oratory debate.

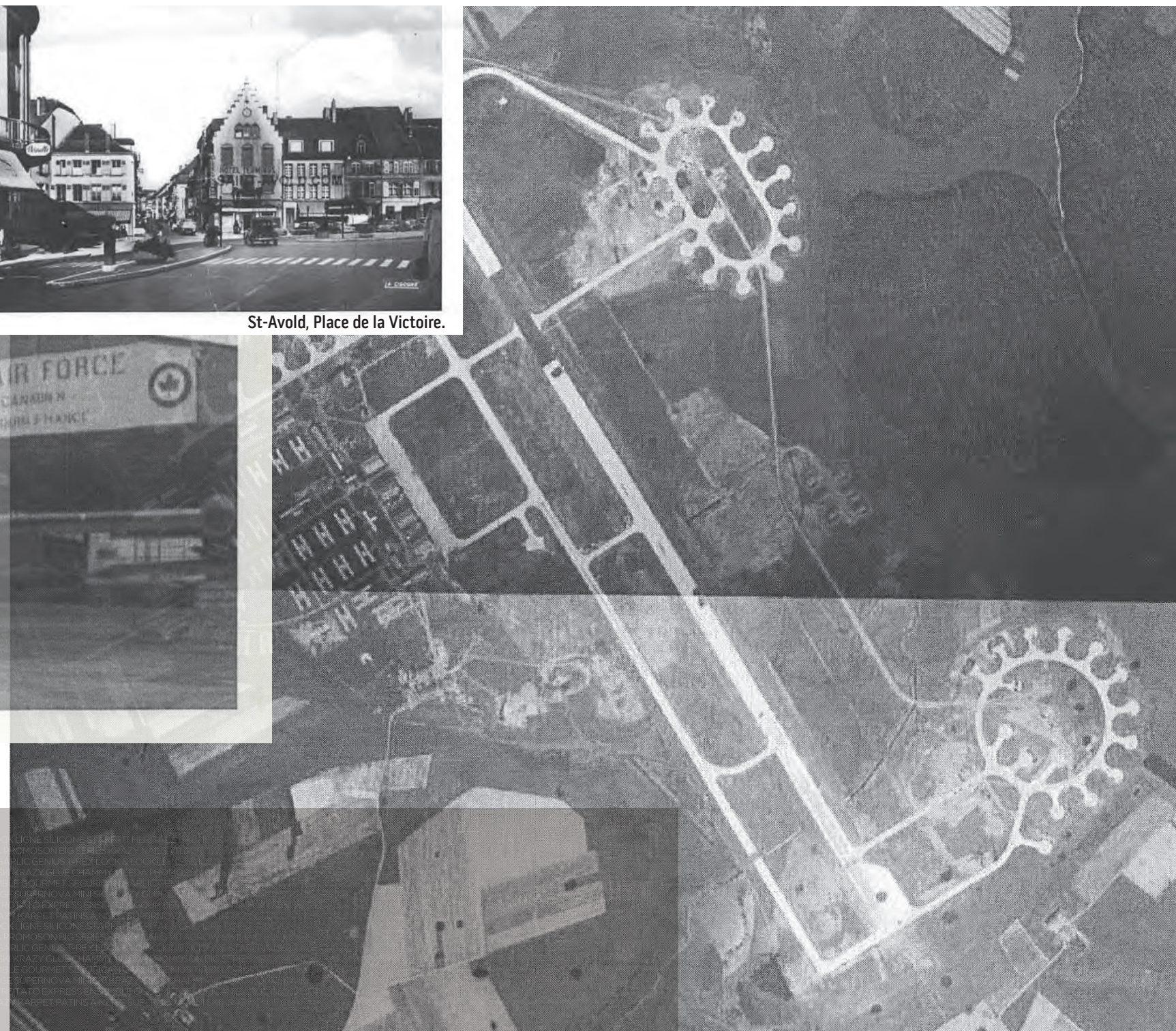


St-Avold, Place de la Victoire.

Grostenquin, July 1955.



The Grostenquin air base in the 1950s.



*At 18 years of age, Jacques joined the Royal Canadian Air Force with the intention of becoming an air traffic controller. The serviceman was assigned service number 156215.*

To begin with he was assigned to the Centralia military training base in Ontario to improve his English skills. Then he became a member of the Military Police. After being transferred to Aylmer for two months, he finished at the top of his class in a security officer training course. Following the training program, he was assigned to RCAF Station Grostenquin in France for two years. He belonged to the RCAF's 2nd Fighter Squadron based near Saint-Avold, in the Moselle region in northeastern France, near the German border.

He was entrusted with the duty of "ammunition depot keeper". It was his responsibility to keep watch over a huge bunker full of weapons. At six foot four inches tall with a strong build, he was perfect for the job.

Every now and then, the young soldier would smoke a cigarette while sitting on top of a bomb.

"In case of emergency, I had received orders to launch a rocket to warn base camp. I was very well aware that with the slightest attack everything would blow up, and they wouldn't even be able to find the soles of my shoes, there was so much ammunition there!" He said there were a few times when he was afraid: "One night, I was making my rounds when I heard a noise in the bushes. Armed, and with my senses on high alert, I went toward the source of the noise only to find...a small hare!".

Jacques Gatien also recalls weekend outings when he went to "visit the girls in St-Avold", near Moselle, with his military comrades. The fog was so thick in the evening in that area that to get to the village, two men would sit on the front wings of the old car and shine flashlights (borrowed from the military supplies) in front so the driver could see where to go.



**In 1956**, during the Queen's visit to Canada, he was chosen to be part of the Honour Guard in front of whom the Queen and Prince Philip would pass.

Mr. Gatien and his friends went through intensive training for one month. Some of

the rules of the Honour Guard stated that members were at no time allowed to move their eyes, and had to remain motionless for hours on end. Jacques Gatien said, with a smile, «The only thing you were allowed to do was lose consciousness.»

Mr. Gatien has fond memories of the camaraderie he experienced during his time in the armed forces.

He also mentioned that during patrols the French gendarmes really liked communicating with him in their mother tongue.

After two years at Grostenquin, the serviceman returned to Lachine, Québec to complete his three-year enlistment. Despite the insistence of the military brass that he re-enlist, he left the armed forces after the completion of his mandate.





*It was after his release from the army that young Jacques began to capitalize on his natural talent as a salesman.*

He began his career by travelling the roads of Québec selling Grolier encyclopedias door-to-door. He was very successful.

After a few months travelling, he returned to Québec for the holidays and was hired as a demonstrator to sell toys. In the streets of Montréal, he sold punching bags filled with oatmeal that made noise, much to the children's delight. He also sold "small kazoo's" such as trombones and saxophones.

His boss quickly sniffed out the exceptional talent of this new demonstrator. He extended his contract after the holidays, and suggested he try selling kitchen utensils. The first product was a health grater which allowed, among other things, to extract the juice from carrots. "I didn't know that a carrot could produce so much juice!", exclaimed Jacques Gatién.

From the time he started out, the young demonstrator proved his innate talent. His presence, his disarming nature, his skill and his deep carrying voice attracted consumers. Daniel Germain, in an article published in 2000 in Commerce business magazine, had this to say: "[...] having spent so much time on stage at school, the giant Gatién could spice up his sales pitches with a theatrical touch."

As for Jacques Gatién, he commented on his beginnings in this way: "Right from my very first demonstration, I made sales. With my size and my voice, I was hard to miss."

His success was such that sales far exceeded what he had envisioned.

**In 1959**, with his curly knife demonstrations, Jacques Gatién could bring in up to \$300 per day. At that time, the annual salary of a Québec teacher was \$5,000 and that of Maurice Richard, star player for the Montreal Canadiens, \$25,000.

Then, after a trade fair at the «Palais du Commerce» in Québec city, the young demonstrator decided to become his own boss. He tells it like this: "The boss, Charlie, pocketed \$950, and I got \$750. I had worked nine days, and he hadn't done a thing!"

I knew the suppliers because I had previously given them money to financially help out my boss who constantly squandered away all his money. So I decided to go it alone."

This wise decision would blaze the path to success for the new entrepreneur.





# T-FAL



# 60's - 70's



# The POPEIL years

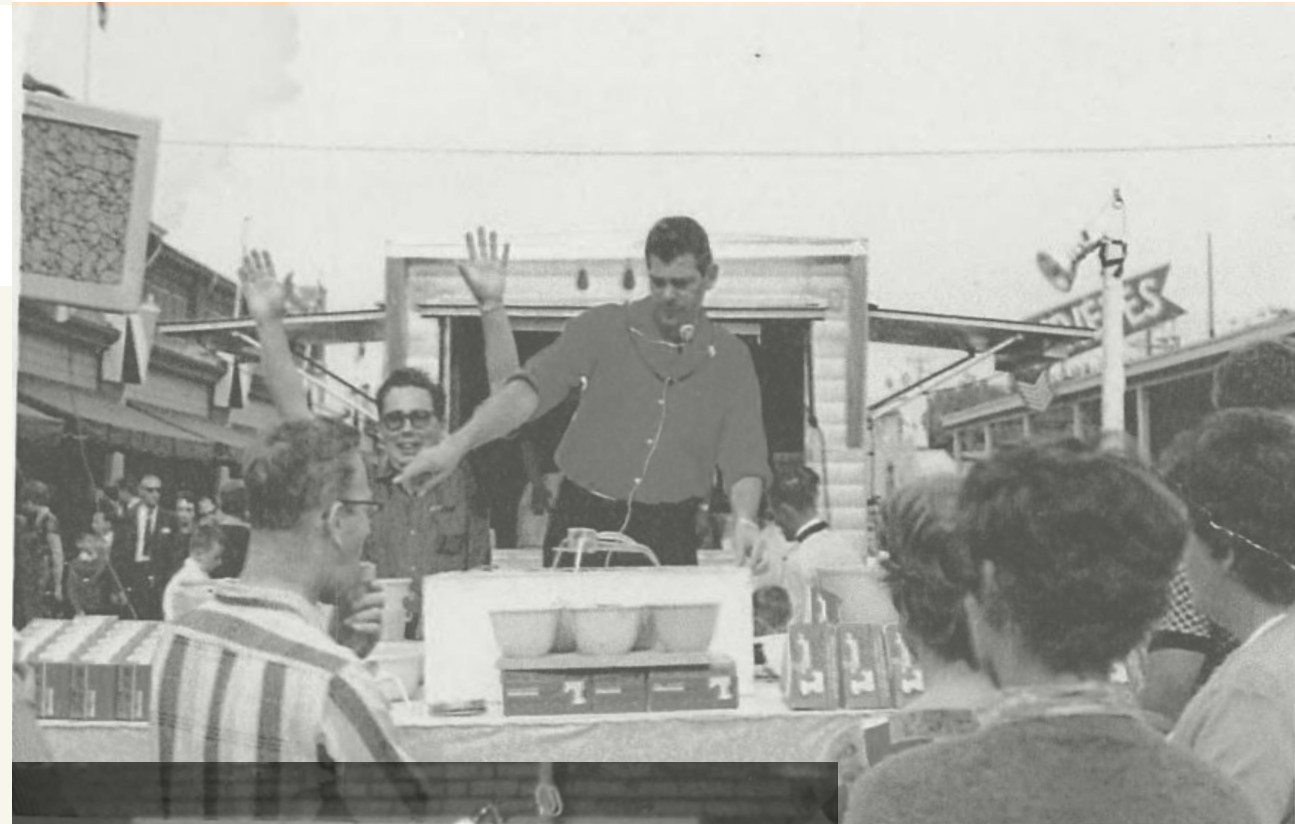
*We refer to the period from 1962 to 1967 as the "Popeil years" of Atlantic Promotions.*

The company sold a lot of cookware then, much of which was designed, developed and/or distributed by Popeil Bros. Inc., a company located in Chicago, and founded by Seymour and Raymond Popeil. Jacques Gatien dealt primarily with Raymond, who was the promoter and salesman of the company recognized for its innovative products.

Thanks to his in-store demonstrations, Jacques Gatien brought several Popeil products to Quebeckers, as well as products from Mouli Manufacturing Corporation (New Jersey) and Crestline (Chicago), to name a few.

One of the first products sold through demonstration by Jacques Gatien before Atlantic Promotions was founded was the Mouli-Julienne. The rotary slicer came with three interchangeable discs that sliced vegetables in different ways.

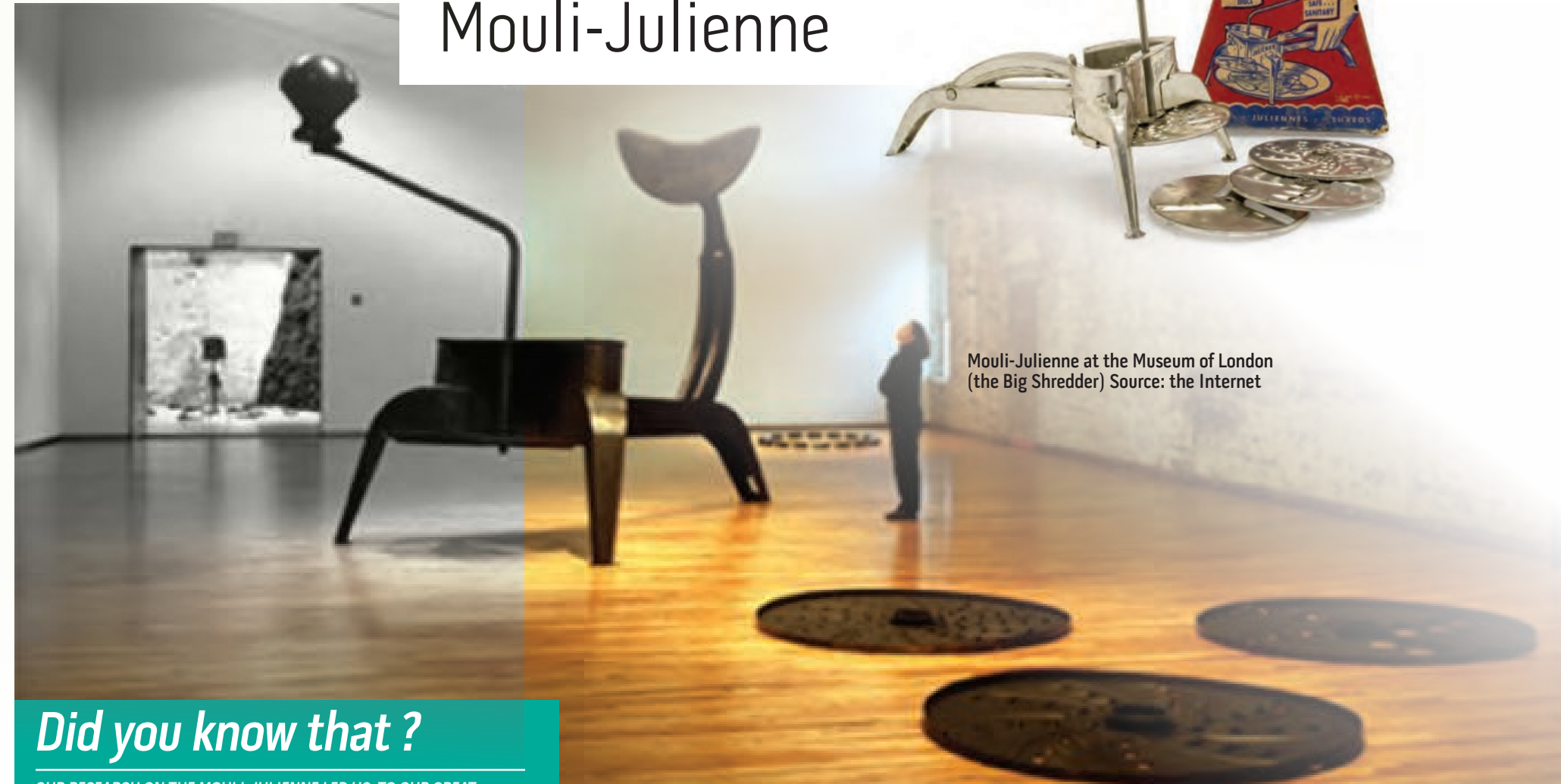
The health grater was also available at that time along with the spiral knife bonus, among others.



Mr. Gatien in other Mouli-Julienne demonstration.

A superb team: Jacques Gatien (arms raised) and Paul De Boeck in the middle of a Mouli-Julienne demonstration in Exposition on Quebec.

# The Mouli-Julienne



Mouli-Julienne at the Museum of London (the Big Shredder) Source: the Internet

**Did you know that ?**  
 OUR RESEARCH ON THE MOULI-JULIENNE LED US, TO OUR GREAT SURPRISE, TO A MUSEUM IN LONDON. THIS GIGANTIC ROTATING SLICER IS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MONA HATOUM, A LEBANESE ARTIST, WHO DRAWS INSPIRATION FROM HER DAILY LIFE FOR HER CREATIONS. EXPANDED SEVENTEEN TIMES, THE GRATER NOW LOOKS LIKE A GIANT INSECT.

Other products such as Veg-O-Matic and its successor Dial-O-Matic, Feather Touch knives, Schneidmeister, Samurai and others were also sold through demonstrations.

SAMURAI KNIFE



HEALTH GRATER, PRODUCT OF ACME



1965 – SCHNEIDMEISTER KNIFE WITH CUT-GUARD



Mr. Gatien performing a demonstration of the Teflon frying pan, from Popeil in Paquet store.



**DELUXE DIAL-O-MATIC**  
 JACQUES GATIEN SOLD THIS PRODUCT THROUGH DEMONSTRATIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS CAREER, BEFORE THE START OF API IN FOUR YEARS AN ESTIMATED 100,000 UNITS WERE SOLD.

Noteworthy: Jacques Gatien wore a white coat during his demonstrations — a question of looking professional!

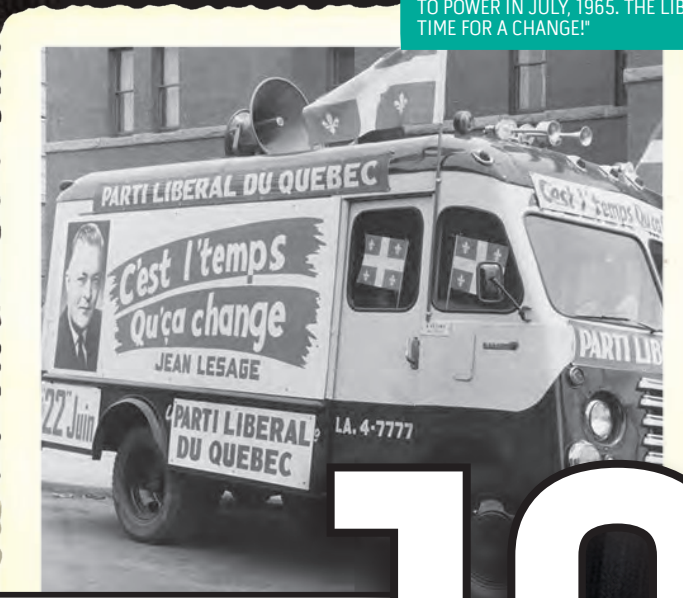
THE DIAL-O-MATIC, DISTRIBUTED BY POPEIL BROS. INC.



First frying pan sold by Jacques Gatien while he was a demonstrator. He spoke highly of the qualities of that Teflon frying pan, a product of Popeil Bros. Inc.

(SEE THE DISPLAY OF FRYING PANS IN THE BACKGROUND OF THE PHOTO ON THE LEFT).

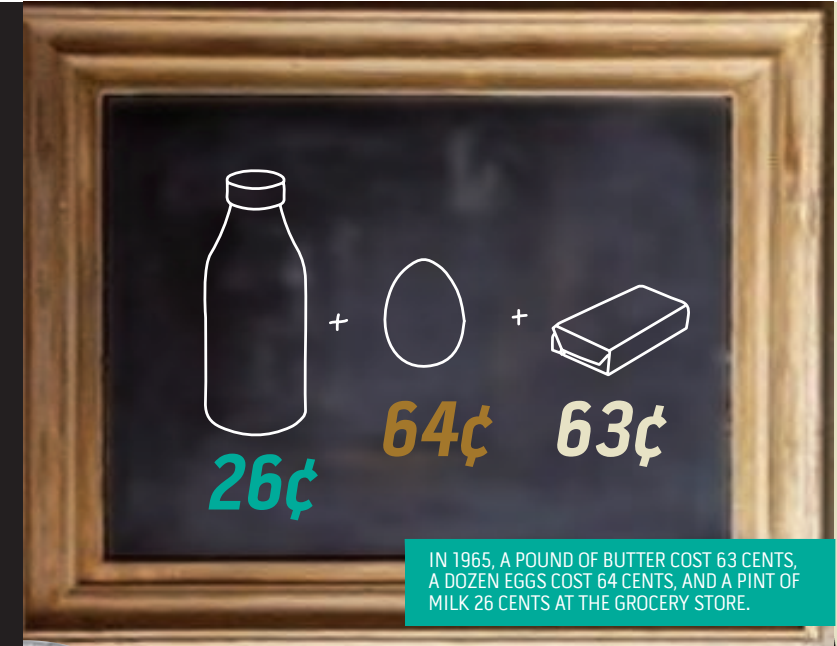




QUEBEC WAS IN THE MIDST OF THE QUIET REVOLUTION, HEADED BY THE HONOURABLE JEAN LESAGE, WHO RETURNED TO POWER IN JULY, 1965. THE LIBERALS SLOGAN WAS: "IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE!"



MINIMUM WAGE WAS 85 CENTS PER HOUR.



IN 1965, A POUND OF BUTTER COST 63 CENTS, A DOZEN EGGS COST 64 CENTS, AND A PINT OF MILK 26 CENTS AT THE GROCERY STORE.



JACQUES GATIEN DROVE A 1965 CHRYSLER NEW YORKER EQUIPPED WITH BUCKET SEATS.

A MEMORABLE YEAR

# 1965



ON OCTOBER 21, THE MONTREAL STOCK EXCHANGE WAS INAUGURATED.



THE FIRST FLIGHT INTO SPACE BY ALEXEI LEONOV OF THE U.S.S.R.

ON OCTOBER 26, 1965, THE BEATLES RECEIVED THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE FROM QUEEN ELIZABETH II.



THE U.S. MARINES WERE IN VIETNAM



OLIVIER GUIMOND MADE QUÉBECKERS LAUGH IN "CRÉ BASILE". "LUI Y CONNAÎT ÇA" WAS A POPULAR LABATT BEER CAMPAIGN.



THE MONTREAL CANADIENS STARTED THE 1965-1966 SEASON AS STANLEY CUP CHAMPIONS.



On Tuesday, October 26, **1965**

**Jacques Gatien, Roméo Brunet and Paul De Boeck** signed the charter of Atlantic Promotions Inc.

## Atlantic Promotions Incorporation

*On Tuesday, October 26, 1965, Jacques Gatien signed the charter of Atlantic Promotions Inc. with two associates, Mr. Paul De Boeck and Mr. Roméo Brunet, both now deceased.*

Roméo and Paul also worked in sales: Roméo as a demonstrator and Paul is in the pool business with Piscines Gibraltar since 1963.

The initial capital consisted of a \$600 personal investment on the part of each partner, and a line of credit of \$3,000.

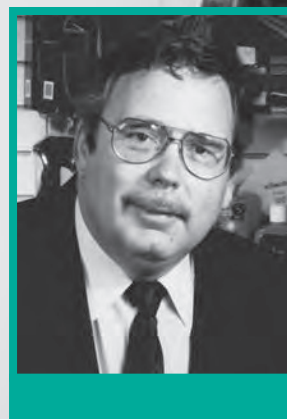
Funny story: one of the partners, Romeo Brunet, had to borrow his down payment from his future mother-in-law!

The company started out from very humble beginnings in a 8 'x 10' room in Quebec City.

The partners were enthusiastic and made every effort to see this company become a "success story." API's history proves that they reached their goal with flying colours.

When someone asked him if he had sensed from the start that Atlantic Promotions would have such an enormous impact over time, Jacques Gatien replied: "I never would have believed it. The rapid success was overwhelming."

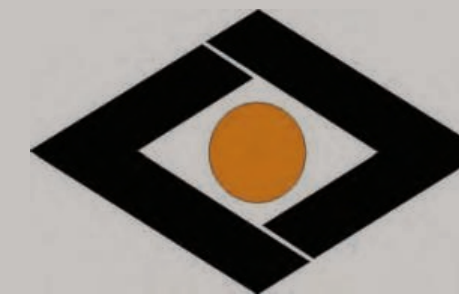
Le mardi 26 octobre 1965  
Jacques Gatien, Roméo Brunet et Paul De Boeck  
signent la charte d'incorporation de  
PROMOTIONS ATLANTIQUES.

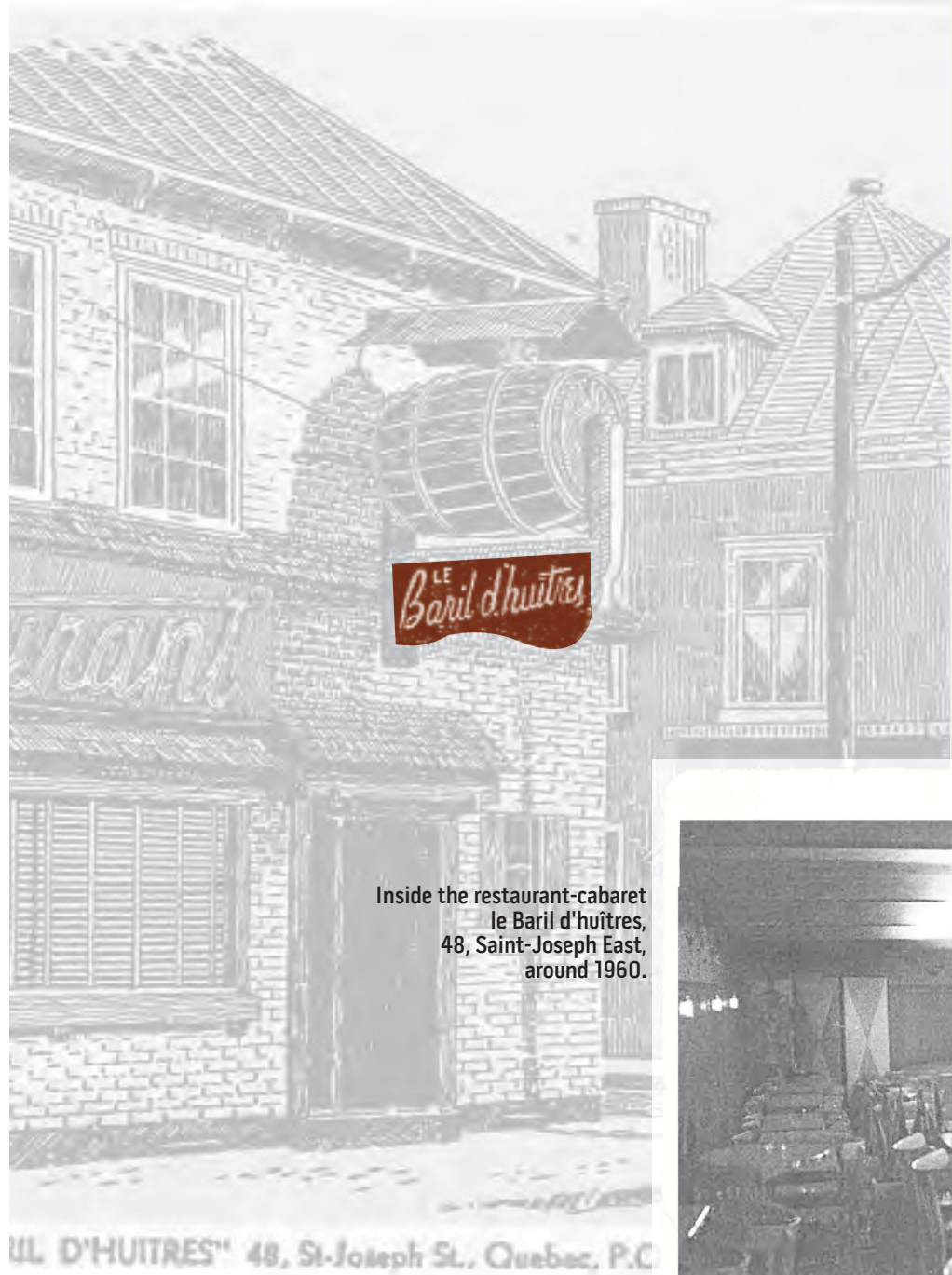


# 1965

### Did you know that ?

THE DESIGNER WHO CREATED THE ATLANTIC PROMOTIONS LOGO WAS INSPIRED BY THE DIRECTION THE COMPANY'S TELEVISION MARKETING WAS HEADED. THE DRAWING SHOWS AN EYE LOOKING AT A TV SCREEN. THIS LOGO IS STILL BEING USED TODAY. ONLY THE COLOUR OF THE « EYE » HAS CHANGED, FROM ORANGE TO BRONZE.





Inside the restaurant-cabaret  
le Baril d'huîtres,  
48, Saint-Joseph East,  
around 1960.



Jacques Gatién was insightful and visionary, and quickly noticed the great potential of his well-orchestrated demonstrations.

He looked for a way to present them to a much greater audience. One day the solution appeared: from Mr. Donat Cyr, a Télé-Métropole representative. Mr. Cyr approached Jacques Gatién during a demonstration in a Québec department store. He proposed that he show his products live on TV.

Jacques Gatién liked this forward-thinking idea immediately, and in 1966, he took his first steps into Québec television.

Jacques Gatién first appeared live on a very popular variety show at the time, produced at the Baril d'huîtres, a legendary Québec cabaret in the 1960s. The show was hosted by none other than Saint-Georges Côté, one of the linchpins of the old capital's artistic life, nicknamed the "Prince of advertisers".



Presented live during breaks, these demonstrations not only reached a very wide audience, but they also had the advantage of having no production costs.

Mr. Gatién recounts the following anecdote about his first "live" television appearances.

"We signed a distribution agreement with Pollack stores in Québec, who had the exclusive rights to sell the Mouli-Julienne slicer.

After my time on air, viewers were invited to call Pollack's to reserve their Mouli-Julienne.

The airing was finished, and I went to Pollack's and asked the manager if he had received a lot of calls. The manager, who took some persuading to carry the item, didn't believe in advertising, and tried to get ahold of the operators.

Unable to reach them, he wanted to check the telephone lines, which he thought were defective. After thirty minutes and several attempts, he managed to speak to an operator who told him that thousands of calls had come in.

Haggard and pale, the manager turned to me and asked me beseechingly: "Do you think you have enough merchandise to meet the demand? We cannot afford to fail ... we have a brand to respect.

We actually met the demand, but not without difficulty..."

## Did you know that ?

IN THE EARLY 1960S, WHILE WORKING AS A DEMONSTRATOR, JACQUES GATIEN REALLY ENJOYED DINING AT THE LUNCH COUNTER IN THE WOOL-WORTH'S STORE WHERE HE COULD, FOR 89 CENTS, ENJOY A COMPLETE MEAL. THE TURKEY DINNER WAS HIS FAVOURITE.



Tel qu'annoncé  
à la T.V.  
As seen on T.V.

"The Mouli -Julienne was distributed by Mouli Manufacturing Corp., a company located in Belleville, in New Jersey, the President was Joe Varkala. For one month, my associates repeatedly shuttled between Québec and New Jersey to replenish our stock in order to meet the demand.

We experienced the same phenomenon with the Dial-o-matic, a product from Popeil, which was sold in Paquet stores."

Several other major successes followed these clear examples. They represent an important step in the history of Atlantic Promotions and show the advertising direction taken by the company since its inception. Television, newly arrived in the home, was an innovative and powerful tool for reaching consumers. This was the beginning of the saying "as seen on TV".

Using television to promote his products, Jacques Gatien wrote an important page in the history of advertising. One can safely say he is the father infomercials in Québec. It is thanks to his vision, his skills as a communicator and demonstrator, and the insight of a sales representative from Télé-metropole that telemarketing took a permanent foothold with us in the late 1960s.



## Pioneers of the Swimming Pool Market in Québec

*One of the innate qualities of an entrepreneur is being constantly on the lookout for market trends and opportunities.*

Around 1963, Paul de Boeck, a future partner in API, detected an interesting potential business possibility for a market novelty: above-ground swimming pools. Paul started selling the swimming pools under the name "Piscines Gibraltar".

In order to promote the product, swimming pools were installed in the parking lot at Place Versailles in Montréal. Once again, the demonstration was in the spotlight, and the salesmen didn't hesitate to dive into the swimming pools to try to attract customers. A Piscines Gibraltar store subsequently opened in Quebec City.

A few years later, Paul de Boeck decided to retire from Atlantic Promotions for personal reasons. He wanted to focus completely on Piscines Gibraltar. Everything was conducted with the following understanding: Paul would carry on with Piscines Gibraltar, and in return Atlantic Promotions would keep the small swimming pool store that opened in Quebec City.

In 1966, the Coleco Company, a swimming pool supplier, offered a new above-ground swimming pool with a wider rim to Jacques Gatien. He saw great potential in this innovative product. It was then that the famous little swimming pool store in Quebec City became Piscines Citadelle.



From left to right: Jacques Gatien, Robert Aumont and a journalist from the "Montreal Matin" in 1972.



Roméo, Robert and Jacques probably discussing swimming pools.



Where did the "Citadelle" name come from? Jacques Gatien was inspired by two factors: both the rim of the pool, which made him think of a rampart, and the view from the store looking out onto the Citadelle of Quebec City.

Towards the end of 1966, Robert Aumont officially entered the picture.

Mr. Aumont was a products distributor who was consistently next to the Atlantic Promotions people at trade fairs and exhibitions. He sold dishes and cutlery, indispensable for the "trousseau of the young housewife."

We remember that at the time most girls who were married didn't arrive home to their love nest empty-handed! They brought a well-stocked trousseau.

So Robert Aumont joined Atlantic Promotions and became a shareholder at the beginning of 1967. It was at this moment that he embarked in the swimming pool business.

In 1967, the Quebec government closed several public beaches because of pollution. This had an enormous impact on sales of above-ground swimming pools.

When Robert became a partner, the company's organization chart was such: Romeo Brunet was President, Robert Aumont held the position of Vice President and Jacques Gatien held the purse strings as Secretary-Treasurer.

Citadelle sold its first swimming pools in Québec City in the parking lots of the Place Laurier and Place Fleur de Lys shopping centres.

In 1972, the first Citadelle store was launched in Montreal. In 1974-75, Piscines Citadelle innovated and set sparks flying with the first gas barbecue in Québec: The "Gaz Gril".

Up until 1979, Piscines Citadelle and Atlantic Promotions were just one company. However, that year there was a demerger in the company. Piscines Citadelle and Atlantic Promotions became two distinct entities.

Robert Aumont took charge of Piscines Citadelle, and Jacques Gatien, Atlantic Promotions. The two businessmen, however, remained partners in each of the companies.



Jacques Gatien, Paul De Boeck and Robert Aumont

Piscines Citadelle was subsequently sold. An offer that could not be refused.

With Piscines Gibraltar and Piscines Citadelle, Paul de Boeck, Jacques Gatien, Roméo Brunet and Robert Aumont were the pioneers of the swimming pool market in Quebec.

They built the foundation in an environment that was not always easy, and for this they deserve our greatest admiration.

But the history of the swimming pools doesn't end there. Jacques Gatien says that in November 1991, his good friend Robert contacted him to offer him the chance to invest with him and other partners in the founding of a new company that would carry the name Club Piscine. Jacques told him that he would think about it. Robert response was: "Don't think for too long, because we're opening in March!"

Jacques Gatien has often said that for an entrepreneur, it's life full speed ahead.

## 50 years of friendship



Montréal, May 11, 2015

It was in 1965 that I met Jacques Gatien, a man who is truly larger than life...

He was demonstrating Atlantic Promotions products at exhibitions in Québec City and at the Salon de la Femme in Montréal. I'm sure you are familiar with his witty eloquence and skills as a speaker.

We quickly became friends, and that friendship has never wavered during all these years. Our actions have always been guided by mutual aid and loyalty.

In 1967, we became partners in Atlantic Promotions and Piscine Citadelle with Roméo Brunet, a partner of Jacques'. In 1979, we split up the two companies. Jacques became CEO of Atlantic Promotions, and myself, CEO of Piscine Citadelle. We both retained shares in the two companies until 2005.

Jacques taught me a lot; he was my mentor. First he made me speak English during our first trip to Chicago...that's an understatement; he also taught me the importance and the basics of advertising.

A traveller, a great creator, a dreamer, a free thinker, he was able to find and develop new products, and market them, thus ensuring the development of his business. He was resilient; he faced much adversity during his career. But he always pulled through—bigger and stronger.

Jacques is also a man of heart and great humanity. If you have a problem, knock on his door and he will always be there for you.

Today, we can say mission accomplished. Atlantic Promotions is prosperous and its future is promising.

And mission accomplished—even more so—because he is surrounded by his wife, his children, his grandchildren, and his many friends. Mission accomplished because during the last 50 years he remained a faithful friend to me, one of great integrity who I can always count on.

Thank you, Jacques!

Happy Anniversary to Atlantic Promotions!



MR. ROBERT AUMONT

# Quiet! We're filming...

*In the mid 60s when the television industry booming, the production of pre-recorded commercials began. In 1966, Atlantic Promotions became one of the first Québec companies to use pre-recorded commercials to promote its products. At that time, commercials lasted five minutes.*

It was Jacques Gatien himself who starred in the first ads. Production teams nicknamed him "one take Gatien" because he was so comfortable and effective in front of the cameras. Most of the time, one take was all that was needed!

One of the first products marketed on television was the Dura Edge knife. It sold for \$2.99 with six steak knives as a bonus.

**Advertising budget :** \$10,000 for a five-week campaign

**Results :** 60,000 knives sold in six weeks.



In the same year, with the participation of the Richelieu grocery store chain and Yves Christian as spokesperson, API launched the Feather Touch knife. This project required a considerable financial investment. Jacques Gatien says about this: "I was trembling...I was scared...I had just signed my life away."

The advertising campaign created quite a stir. We would cut the heel off a shoe, a block of wood, and a piece of paper. Télé-Métropole were flooded with calls from outraged parents complaining that their children were destroying their shoes. They wanted us to pull the advertisements from the airwaves.

**Advertising budget: \$15,000**

**Results:** 90,000 knives sold in six weeks.

TV made Jacques Gatien a star. In the street, children would follow him attempting to imitate him: "Cabbages, carrots, cucumbers, potatoes... try our amazing knives! The knife would pass through a head of lettuce quicker than a rabbit."

In 1966, still with Épicerie Richelieu, API launched a second product: a Teflon frying pan, made by Popeil Bros. It sold for \$3.98, and came with an automatic pancake batter dispenser as a bonus. We sold 60,000 units in only a few weeks.

Another product that was a phenomenal TV success with consumers that year: The Blitz hacker. This innovative chopper was advertised on TV in the Montréal area, and was available at Miracle Mart, among others.

Sales grew quickly, and inventories were depleted in no time. Interesting fact, at the time API's warehouse was located in the double garage of a home in Anjou, Qc. We were still a long way away from the 150,000 square feet of storage space that we have today.

We contacted the manufacturer to replenish our stock. Bad news: the distributor claimed to have no more units available for API, because his U.S. customers took priority.

Desperate times called for desperate measures! Jacques Gatien rented a 45 foot trailer and asked Robert Aumont and Rudy Brunet to leave immediately for Chicago. The game plan was clear: The guys were to park the trailer in front of the manufacturing warehouse door, keeping it blocked until the trailer was filled.

The strategy worked, but Robert and Rudy had to work on the assembly line before returning to Montréal with 20,000 units of the famous Blitz Hacker.



The Feather Touch knife

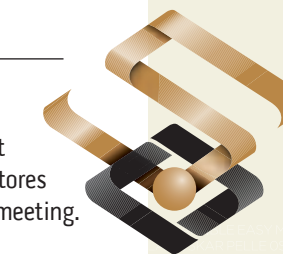
The amazing Blitz Hacker Food Chopper.



**"He was like a "Rock Star"  
standing behind the demo counter..."**

– Solly Feldman

## How time flies!!!



*June 2015*

It seems like yesterday, but in fact, it is over 46 years ago (1969) that I first met Jacques. It was when I was the Housewares buyer at Steinberg's Miracle Mart stores and this young, tall, burly gentleman was in the reception area for our very 1st meeting.

This was at a time when 'Atlantic Promotions' were starting to do a fair amount of 'in store demos' with a variety of Houseware gadgets, and Jacques wanted to start selling "Miracle Mart", which was at that time a major retailer in Canada, and especially strong in Québec.

As we are all aware today, it was not difficult to like Jacques then, as his demeanour and personality was and still is unique in so many ways, that I decided to give Jacques a few test stores to sell the "Food Chopper" as well as the "Kitchen Magician".

The rest is history, as the results were staggering, especially in the stores that Jacques personally did the demos, as he was like a "rock star" standing behind the demo counter, pitching his stuff like no one else! He was the "ULTIMATE" and in a class of his own! 'Atlantic Promotions' had difficulty supplying the complete chain at the beginning, as the gadgets were going out the door faster than one could believe!

It was obvious in the early 70's that Jacques was "One Of A Kind", in our industry and has always had the ability to find that ONE product that would generate newness and excitement at store level, which in turn, created sales and profit for all in the supply chain.

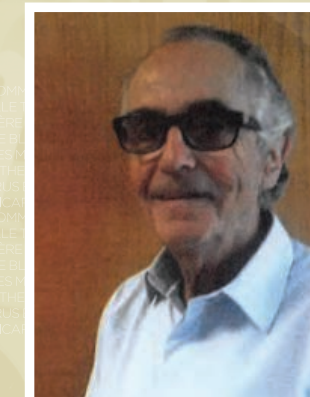
Who would ever believe that Atlantic Promotions (Jacques and his team) would get all the support possible from me 45 years ago, and here we are in 2015, where both Atlantic and Accent Fairchild have strong presence in the Housewares Industry.

To this day, our entire team @ Accent and myself have the outmost respect for Jacques, who in my opinion is an 'Icon' in the 'World of Housewares'.

I am so very proud to have known Jacques for so many years and wish him and his family (both personal & business), the very best of health and happiness for many more years.

Your good friend (and competitor)

Solly



MR. SOLLY FELDMAN, PRESIDENT  
GROUPE ACCENT-FAIRCHILD INC.

# With **T-FAL**, Atlantic Promotions move into second gear!

*In 1966, an unexpected phone call was the basis for an agreement that would be key to Atlantic Promotions' rapid growth.*

The commercial attaché of the French Embassy in Montréal contacted Mr. Gatien about a French company that was looking for a distributor in Canada.

This company, located in Annecy, went by the name of T-Fal, and manufactured a revolutionary product: a nonstick frying pan considered superior to Popeil's Teflon frying pan. Until then, the T-Fal pan was only sold in Canada at exhibitions and trade shows. In fact, it was during these functions that the people from T-Fal got to see Mr. Gatien in action.

Initial discussions between the parties were unsuccessful. T-Fal France required orders of at least two containers at a time to grant rights of the distribution.

At this time, Atlantic Promotions could not afford to buy such large quantities all at once. Mr. Gatien turned to the T-Fal distributor in the United States, Mr. Joe Varkala, and worked out an agreement to supply the goods to Atlantic Promotions.

And so began the Canadian distribution of T-Fal products for Atlantic Promotions.



A formal agreement with T-Fal France would be finalized later. It was in **1968** that the official launch of T-Fal products in Canada took place.

Jacques Gatien achieved a master stroke: he convinced the late Mrs. Françoise Gaudet-Smet to become the spokesperson for T-Fal. The snappy slogan he came up with was one in a million: "T-FAL, it's my frying pan!", repeated convincingly by Mrs. Smet in all of the commercials. At that time, Ms. Gaudet-Smet was a radio and television host who was well-respected by the public. She had never done commercials, and her reputation was one of a woman of integrity. For five years, she proudly assumed her role as T-Fal spokesperson.

From the beginning of the first advertising campaign, Jacques Gatien knew that this relationship with Ms. Gaudet-Smet would be a very positive one. In no time, the slogan was on everyone's lips, and sales took off at breakneck speed!

**The year 1979** marked the end of the supply from Joe Varkala, and the beginning of an official relationship with T-Fal in France.

Our success with T-Fal would span a period of almost thirty years.

New additions were regularly added to the range, and the brand was gaining in popularity across the country. In a few years it became "the" benchmark for nonstick cookware.

T-Fal's market share in Canada was second in the world, after France. In Canada, The name "T-Fal" became, a generic for all non-stick coated frying pans.

So much so that, in 1996, at the time the European group SEB announced its intention to acquire the T-Fal brand, Atlantic Promotions was selling 2.5 million units of these products in Canada annually, generating sales of almost \$25 million.

The T-Fal brand was well established, popular, and renowned across Canada.

Soon SEB would inform Atlantic Promotions' management of its intention to eventually take over the distribution of its products.

The news was hard to take for Jacques Gatien, who with his team, put so much time, money and energy into building, the brand in Canada. In addition, the shortfall created by the loss of T-Fal jeopardized the future of the company. A compensation plan was required.

Atlantic Promotions therefore entered into negotiations that led to a new partnership agreement with SEB for the Canadian distribution of T-Fal. Both parties joined forces to create a new company that bore the name T-Fal Promotions. Under the agreement, Atlantic Promotions percentage of ownership in the new entity would decrease from 100% **in 1995** to 20% **in 2000**.

The Quebec company made the decision to end its partnership with the SEB Group. Atlantic Promotions was obliged to respect a non-compete clause of 18 months for the sale of cookware.

Thirty years after the establishment of the relationship, Jacques Gatien saw \$25 million of his company's sales go through the door. He drew a great lesson from this experience: "Never again will I build a brand from the ground up that doesn't belong to me..."

Undeterred, the entrepreneur already had another idea in mind.

*To be continued...*

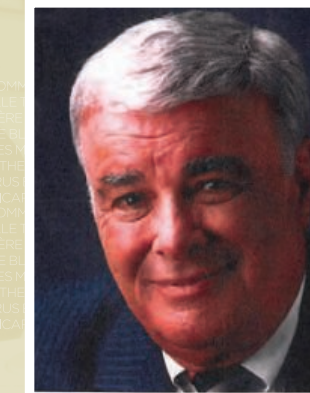


Upon the arrival in Canada of the ten millionth T-Fal item, Mr. Paul Rivier, CFO of T-Fal S.A. France, and Mr. Jacques Gatien, CEO of Atlantic Promotions, exchanged "gold frying pans".



***"It's only creative if it sells."***

– Al Eicoff



A.EICOFF  
FOUNDING PRESIDENT  
A. EICOFF & COMPANY  
1921-2002

## Eicoff



One of Jacques Gatién's mentors was Alvin Eicoff, founding president of American advertising agency Eicoff, which specialized in telemarketing.

During the 1970s, Mr. Gatién often travelled to Chicago to discuss advertising and marketing with him.

For many years, this agency handled our media buys on the different networks.

Mr. Gatién still laughs at an incident that took place in Al's office. The two businessmen were talking when Al Eicoff asked his secretary to get Mr. Art (Arthur) Nelson (distributor of the Blitz Hacker) on the phone.

A few minutes later, the secretary told her boss that Mr. Nelson was on the phone. Mr. Eicoff replied: "Take a message!"

On a more serious note, we'd like to point out that Mr. Gatién has always been inspired by this sentence which appeared permanently above Al Eicoff's desk, and which sums up his philosophy:

***"It's only creative if it sells."***

**A. Eicoff & Company**

# Winter Games

Sliding is a popular winter activity in Canada. In general, the faster the children slide down the hill, the more enjoyment they get out of it. The faster they go, the more fun they have.

In the early 70s, people had pretty much abandoned sledding, and along came a new trend. Young people started to hit the slopes on large pieces of plastic or cardboard to gain speed.

A member of the Atlantic Promotions team had the idea to manufacture a plastic mat that not only guaranteed a speedy descent, but was flexible and light for climbing back up the hill. Another employee came up with the idea of adding two handles. And Krazy Karpet was born! It immediately took off! Young people were fighting over them. It was amazing how much fun they could get out of something that only cost \$2.99!



**TAPIS LUGE  
KRAZY  
KARPET**

What baby boomer didn't have a Krazy Karpet? Generations of people have enjoyed the product and it's still selling in 2015! Now it's the grandchildren of those baby boomers that are having a great time hurtling down the slopes on their Krazy Karpets!



Here's a fact: the first Mini-Skis advertisement was filmed at Mont Gabriel and featured a talented young skier, Philippe Laroche. In 1994, he won an Olympic medal at the Lillehammer Games.



In the same period, another product was launched which was also a big hit with children: Mini Skis. In the early 70s, it was hard to find a Christmas tree that didn't have a pair of Olympic 80 Mini Skis under it! A lot of young people really got their first taste of downhill skiing on Olympic 80 Mini Skis.

Still within the range of winter sports, API also launched Super Gliders snow skates, and the Jumper, a type of mini ski you could sit on. The latter two, however, aroused less enthusiasm than the original mini skis.

Next, came the IGGY Snow Block Maker for building beautiful igloos and forts. Unfortunately, this too fell short of our expectations.

By the middle of 1970's the line of winter sports toys was sold.



**mini skis  
olympic 80**

# The Sure-Set

We all know that social media today can spread news, good or bad, at the speed of lightning.

But it's nothing new that the media (plain and simple) have a major influence in society.

In 1969, Atlantic Promotions launched the SURE SET product, an item that hooked fish once they bit or snapped, and then a red indicator would appear.

AM radio was very popular at the time. A CJMS host, Rocky Brisebois gave a very bad review of the product on air.

"He killed a good product", recalls Jacques Gatién.



Mr. Gatién and his good friend Paul De Boeck.

ATLANTIC PROMOTIONS ATLANTIQUES INC.  
televisual promotion télévisuelle

Tel qu'annonce à la T.V.  
As seen on T.V.

## Soyez un pêcheur expert Be an expert fisherman

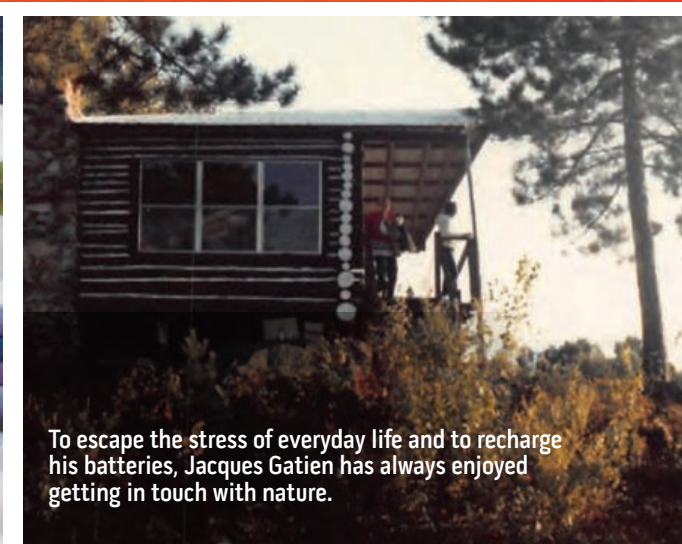
Sure-Set™

Soyez un pêcheur expert avec cette **NOUVELLE SENSATION POUR LA PÊCHE**, qui vous donne des signaux visuels et auditifs lorsqu'il amorce automatiquement l'hameçon dans la bouche du poisson.  
Be an expert fisherman with **NEW FISHING SENSATION** that gives you visual & audio signals when it automatically sets the hook in the fish's mouth.

Un indicateur rouge apparaît dès que le Sure-Set s'accroche. / Red visual signal appears when Sure-Set is triggered.

**NEW!** as seen on TV  
**NOUVEAU!** tel qu'annoncé à la TV

TV PROMOTION RUSH TO DEPARTMENT



To escape the stress of everyday life and to recharge his batteries, Jacques Gatién has always enjoyed getting in touch with nature.





Toronto Office.



Vancouver Office.



770, boulevard Guimond, Longueuil.

## Did you know that?

GIVEN THEIR GROWING SUCCESS, IN 1973 ATLANTIC PROMOTIONS MOVED FROM QUEBEC CITY TO LONGUEUIL.

1ST ADDRESS IN LONGUEUIL: 2430 RUE DE LA PROVINCE. THE COMPANY SUBSEQUENTLY MOVED TO 420 PLACE TRANS-CANADA INTO THE BUILDING PREVIOUSLY OCCUPIED BY CCM. SINCE 1986, WE'VE BEEN AT 770 BOULEVARD GUIMOND.

## From coast to coast

*In the mid 70s, Atlantic Promotions made a major acquisition by purchasing the bankrupt Telpro company.*

Telpro was already a distributor of Atlantic Promotions' products in Ontario and western Canada before the transaction. The new company, an API property, would bear the name F.P. Feature Products Inc.

This acquisition marked a major turning point in the history of our company: we went national.

We would soon open sales offices in Toronto and Vancouver.

Atlantic Promotions distributed products from coast to coast.



## Vita Grow

*In the mid 70s, at an exhibition in Chicago, Jacques Gatién met an American businessman who sold plant fertilizer.*

Confident in this product and its potential, Mr Gatién decided to market it in Canada. The product was sold under the name Vita Grow. "Vita" for vitamins and "Grow" for grow.

Gaston Charbonneau, founder of the Floral Itée company, was chosen as the spokesperson for the product. TV advertising began on a Monday and, by Thursday, Woolco had placed thousands of orders for Vita Grow.

The slogan "Have faith in Charbonneau, you need Vita Grow" quickly became hugely popular. In today's vocabulary, we would have said "It went viral."

The Vita Grow commercials had without a doubt captured the imagination of Quebecers. The commercial was even parodied during the Bye-Bye' 1977! (Popular Quebec New Year's Eve show).

It is even referred to today, some 35 years later.

**In 2012**, in a blog on the Provincial Government's budget, it was written: "With Liberal Vita Grow, the number of public servants has blossomed beautifully."



As for the product, despite good sales, we unfortunately had to withdraw it from the market prematurely because of a trademark issue.

The company, Swift Canada, which owned the Vitagro brand name, forced us to give up the name of our product. We tried to market it under another name, Mr. Botanix, but without the same success.



# The "Vinyl" Years

From 1975 to 1978, Atlantic Promotions successfully embarked on promoting vinyl records (LPs) under the Promoson label.

The first album released in 1975 was a phenomenal success: Soirée Québécoise du Temps des Fêtes, vol. 1 sold over 330,000 copies in record time!

In 1975, this album held the record for highest number of copies sold per capita, in the world (for a french album).

The album consisted of two LPs that included 35 reels and folk songs from among the most popular tunes at year-end family gatherings. Many publicly-known artists who participated in the production of these albums included: Georges d'Or, Ti-Blanc Richard, Monsieur Pointu, Muriel Millard and André Lejeune.

On the English side, actor John Candy played the role of Santa Claus on the album cover.

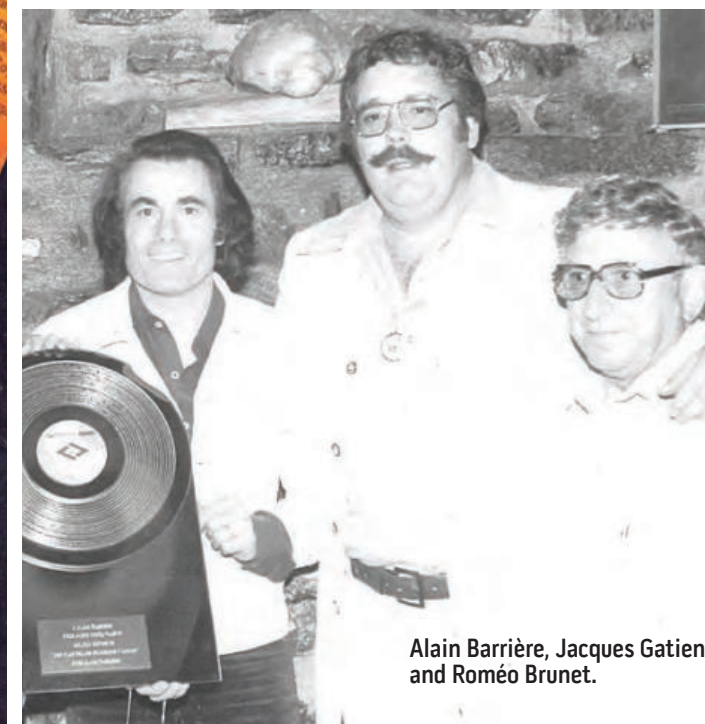
The suggested retail price was \$6.99. This first album was followed by Soirée québécoise, Volume 2.

In 1977, Promoson reinvented Christmas classics by changing the rhythm. In order to follow the musical tastes of the day, Promoson introduced Disco Christmas!

Again, several popular artists of the day were part of the lineup: Charles Linton, France Castel and Shirley Thérout were among them.



Mr. Gatién and Roger Whittaker.



Alain Barrière, Jacques Gatién and Roméo Brunet.

Furthermore, other LPs completed the series of Christmas records. The following titles would certainly bring back memories to many of you:

- *Mes plus belles chansons d'amour*, by **Alain Barrière** (more than 150,000 copies sold)
- *20 All Time Greats*, by **Roger Whittaker** (100,000 copies sold)
- *Michel Fugain et le Big Bazar*
- *Prélude à l'amour*
- *Nos plus belles chansons d'hier*
- *Big Band Sound*
- *Ti-Gus et Ti-Mousse*
- *Gilbert Bécaud*
- *Jean-Pierre Ferland* (on 8-track cartridges)

The promotion of most of these LPs was done through TV commercials which were "tagged" that is to say the logos of merchants who sold the record would appear at the end of the advertisement.

In three years, the Promoson record division had sales of two million dollars.

Sales subsequently declined. The fierce competition from K-Tel Records hurt the division, and the latest albums produced sold less well. In addition, records and other products, such as toys, were sold on consignment at merchants, and Atlantic Promotions wanted to end this practice.

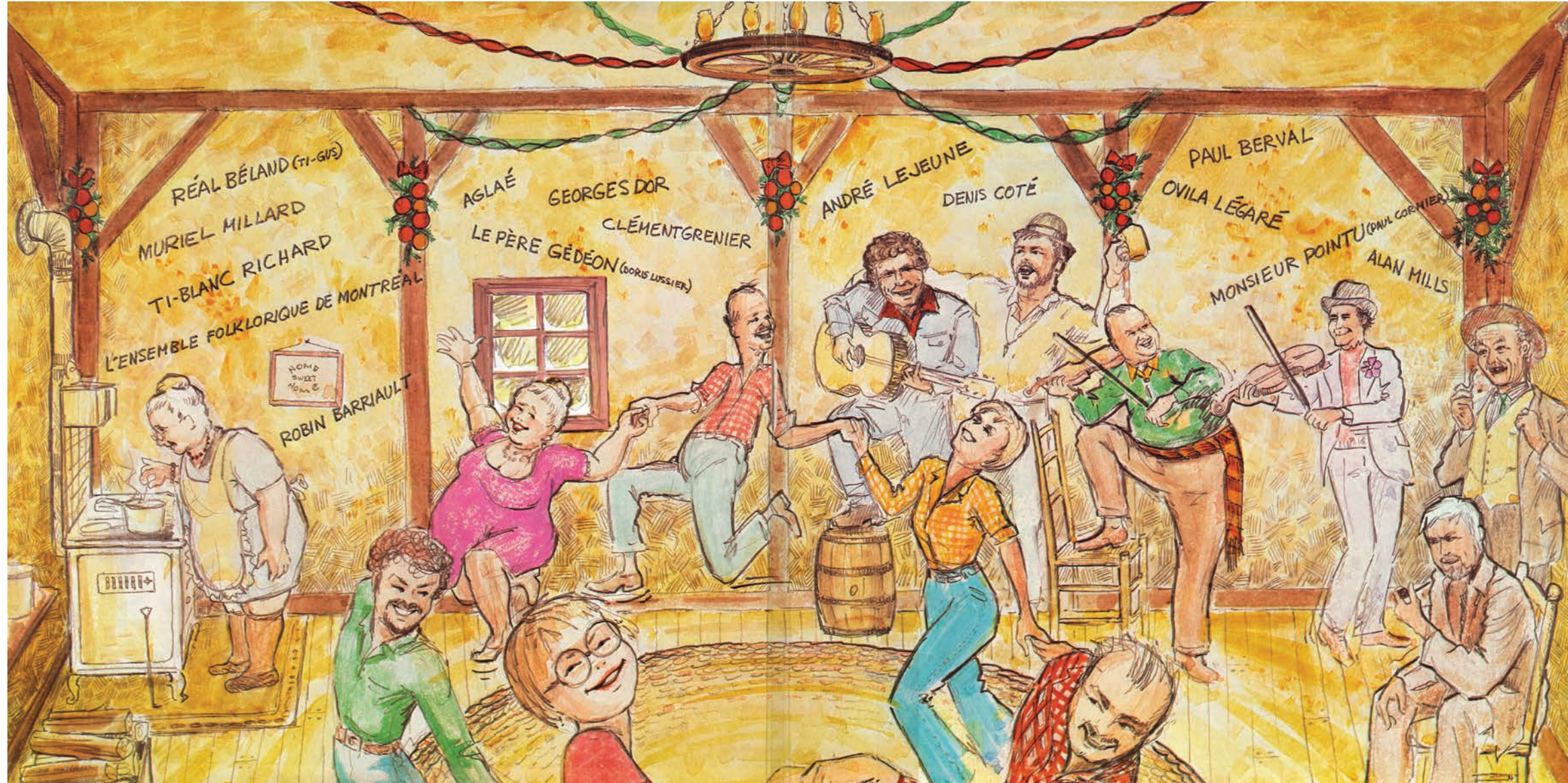
In the late 1970s, rather than continue along this line, the company decided to focus its efforts on the T-Fal division, which generated an increasingly important amount of sales in Canada.

# Soirée québécoise du temps des Fêtes



MOUFS DIMANCHE DU TEMPS DES FÊTES - JAN. 1981

PLAGE 1	ARTISTES	MOUFS
1	André Lejeune	1.00
2	Paul Berval	1.00
3	Denis Côté	1.00
4	Clément Grenier	1.00
5	Georges Dor	1.00
6	Aglaé	1.00
7	Le Père Gédéon (Goris Lussier)	1.00
8	Robinson	1.00
9	Le Père Gédéon (Goris Lussier)	1.00
10	Aglaé	1.00
11	Georges Dor	1.00
12	Clément Grenier	1.00
13	Denis Côté	1.00
14	Paul Berval	1.00
15	André Lejeune	1.00
16	Clément Grenier	1.00
17	Georges Dor	1.00
18	Aglaé	1.00
19	Le Père Gédéon (Goris Lussier)	1.00
20	Robinson	1.00
21	Le Père Gédéon (Goris Lussier)	1.00
22	Aglaé	1.00
23	Georges Dor	1.00
24	Clément Grenier	1.00
25	Denis Côté	1.00
26	Paul Berval	1.00
27	André Lejeune	1.00
28	Clément Grenier	1.00
29	Georges Dor	1.00
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33	Le Père Gédéon (Goris Lussier)	1.00
34	Aglaé	1.00
35	Georges Dor	1.00
36	Clément Grenier	1.00
37	Denis Côté	1.00
38	Paul Berval	1.00
39	André Lejeune	1.00
40	Clément Grenier	1.00
41	Georges Dor	1.00
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94	Aglaé	1.00
95	Georges Dor	1.00
96	Clément Grenier	1.00
97	Denis Côté	1.00
98	Paul Berval	1.00
99	André Lejeune	1.00
100	Clément Grenier	1.00



The whole team, with Jacques Gatien in the background.

# The Vileda Chammy

*In 1974, Jacques Gatien travelled to Brussels to visit a trade show, hoping to discover new products.*

Travelling was expensive, and he didn't want to disappoint his partners.

So he decided to go and have a look at a few large stores in the area. It was then that he witnessed a chamois demonstration. He bought a chamois, and subsequently got in touch with the manufacturer.

The Vileda chamois was soon to become available in Canada through API. It would become the beginning of a long partnership between API and the Vileda Company, of the Freudenberg Household Products International Group.

Over the years, the twist mop, the fibro-contact mop, and micro-fibre towels, among others, completed this range of products.



The ExStatic mop attracts and traps dirt, dust and hair.



## The «Once a Year Car Polish»



*Al Eicoff, president of the famous American advertising agency of the same name, worked closely with Peter Goldman of REED UNION CORPORATION in Chicago.*

Al Eicoff introduced Jacques Gatien to Mr. Goldman who, it turned out, had some interesting products to offer.

The first REED UNION product sold in Canada by Atlantic Promotions was the NU VINYL vinyl protector. This product received mixed reactions from consumers. A little later, API launched NU FINISH on the market. The "Once a Year Car Polish" was a huge success.

The fact that Jacques Duval a well-known auto journalist, was the spokesperson in the advertisements brought great credibility to the product.

The advertising slogan was a real testament to the product's effectiveness: "After several washes, water still beads off."

Initially, the Canadian Tire chain refused to sell the product. We should mention that our product had to compete with the SIMONIZES and the TURTLE WAXES of the world. After a while, and further discussion, NU FINISH finally made its debut in Canadian Tire stores.



Jacques Duval, race car driver, journalist, and renowned automotive columnist, photographed here in the 70s.

We had reached an agreement that no other product would be allowed to compete with NU FINISH in the Canadian Tire flyer for a period of 30 days.

However, the week before our advertisement appeared, Canadian Tire decided to advertise a new product in its flyer: the "Instant Turtle Wax". The following week, our sales were 50% lower than expected.

Then, the Canadian Tire buyer made a unilateral decision that would affect API for several years. He removed the Pants Saver Car Mats and the NU FINISH line of products from his product assortment.

When it came to the distribution of NU FINISH, Canadian Tire was the big player. By losing them, sales dropped significantly, causing an inventory surplus. In the end, the supplier decided to take over distribution of his product in Canada. We later learned that the buyer for Canadian Tire was in conflict of interest in this case.

Unfortunately, our company paid the price.

# The Bee Mop



*What do Nu Finish and the Bee Mop have in common? At first glance, there is no connection between these two products? However, their history is connected...*

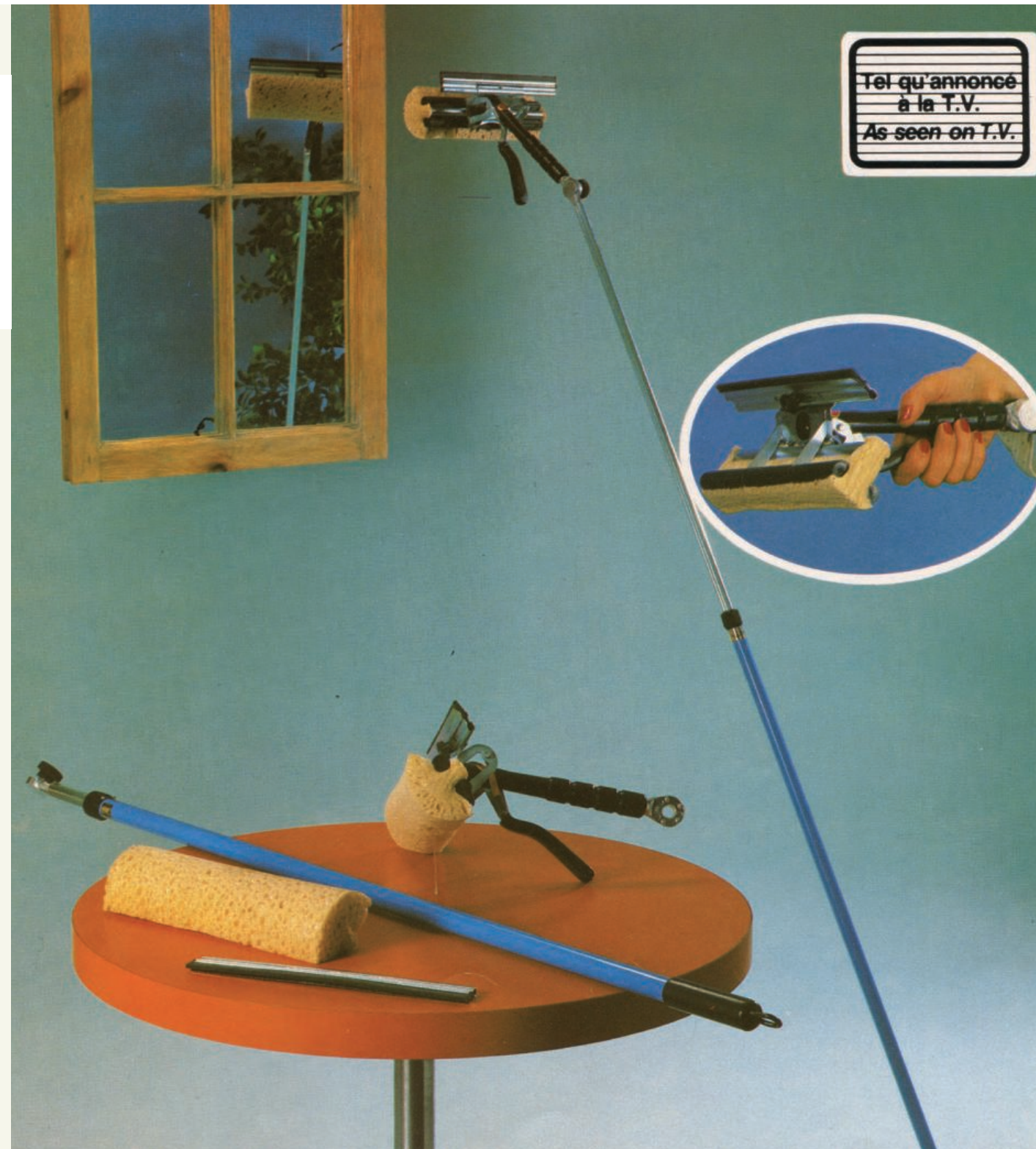
Around 1977, Jacques Gatien was in Chicago to meet with the president of Nu Finish. While the latter kept him waiting in the lobby, Jacques Gatien flipped through a magazine called What's New in Europe. A small ad (just a little bigger than a stamp) drew his attention. It was describing a new mop, extremely popular with consumers, called the "Bee Mop". He had heard about the success of roll mops in the United States. But it was unheard of in the Canadian market!

Jacques Gatien tore out the ad and slipped it into his pocket. When he returned to Canada, he instructed his marketing director to immediately leave for Italy to meet with the manufacturer of this product. He told him: "You're leaving for Italy. I want 25,000 units, and I don't want to pay more than \$4 each!"

An agreement was signed and, in 1978, we successfully launched the Bee Mop in Canada.

The rest is history:

**8 million** units sold between 1980 and 2005.





# 80's - 90's



# Milan Cream Soap

*In the fall of 1981, after six months of re-search on the formula, we launched the Milan cream soap.*

The Milan cream soap was a great innovation: it was the very first liquid hand soap marketed in Canada. It came in a pump dispenser. Its name came from the first name of the marketing director responsible for the development of this novelty, Mr. Milan Lang.

While we were looking for a catchy packaging for this product, Mr. Lang's wife was inspired when she saw a package of three bars of soap at the grocery store. The design of the original container is meant to represent three stacked bars of soap so that the consumer would fully understand what it was.

The Milan soap was an immediate and extraordinary success with consumers. Its formula was enriched with jojoba, a beauty secret that comes from the desert. Jojoba oil, extracted from the fruit of the shrub with the same name, is known for its soothing properties. The Milan soap, as promised in its commercials, left skin soft, fresh and silky.

Sales forecasts, initially estimated at 250,000 units for the fall semester, were revised upwards to 500,000 units just before the launch. Ultimately, one million units were sold in just three months, and at that rate the pumps would soon have been out of stock.



The Milan logo on the container is a reproduction of Mr. Milan Lang's true signature.



Our suppliers produced 150,000 pumps per month, but it was insufficient to meet the demand, and that was just in Québec. The scarcity of the pumps created delays that slowed down product distribution in other provinces at a really bad time, with other, not insignificant, competitors being around. By marketing a cream soap with a pump, API had attacked the empire of the multinationals.

At one point, API was number one in sales in Québec and number two in Canada, just behind Jergens soap and the powerful Procter & Gamble.

So that the price of our product could remain competitive, jojoba oil, which is expensive and rare, would eventually be replaced in the original formula with aloe vera.

**In 1974**, we had our best year with the Milan soap: four million units sold.

This foray into the multinationals' market obviously paved the way for the development of similar products, by major players SC Johnson and Procter & Gamble. These large companies, which have huge financial resources, obviously couldn't let themselves be outperformed on their own turf by a small company operating in Longueuil's industrial park. We did not expect their counter attack: they flooded the Canadian market with hand soaps similar to our cream soap. Despite our strength in Québec, we could not compete with these brand names nationwide.

We still distributed this product in Québec until 2006, when it was sold to Cosmepro.

# The Pants Saver mat



*The story began with three businessmen, seated in a restaurant during a snow storm, noticed that customers entering the restaurant were all wearing pants soiled by slush.*

A few years later, the story made its way to API where an employee told Jacques Gatién that she knew people who were working on the development of a particularly innovative car mat that was supposed to protect pants from slush.

The inventors of the mat in question had proceeded to test market the product in some Rona stores, but without great success. They were looking for an experienced partner in development and marketing. A meeting was set up with Mr. Gatién.

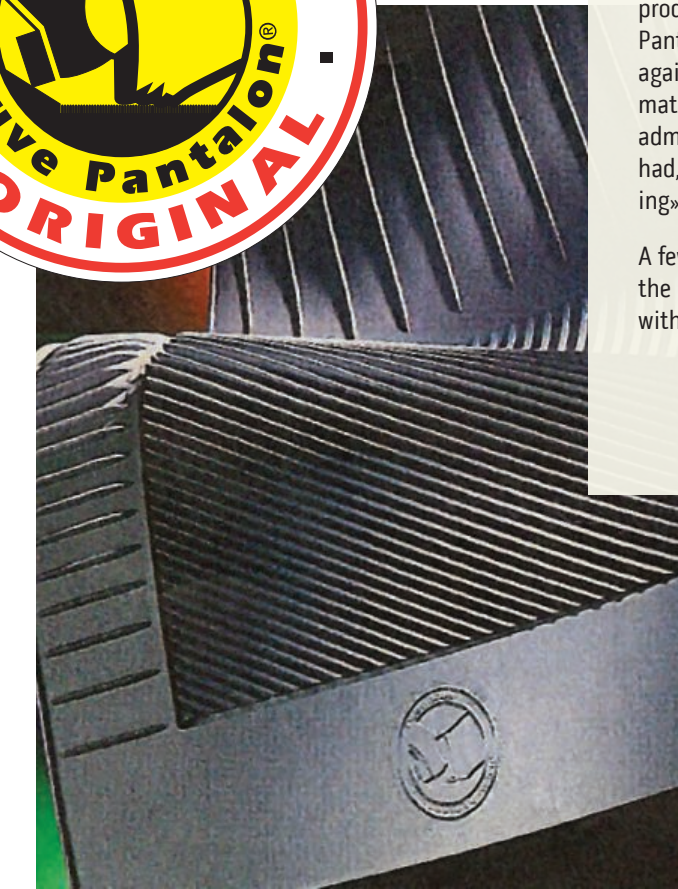
After examining the product, Mr. Gatién revealed two major problems: the mat was really too heavy (20 pounds), and it lost flexibility in cold weather. On the other hand, he strongly believed in the mat because it would meet a real need for Canadian consumers: because slush was very annoying for several months of the year.

So the mat was redesigned using a new material: a lighter, more flexible resin, developed specifically for Atlantic Promotions. The result: a mat that weighed six pounds, that remained flexible even in extreme cold, and came in an assortment of four colours.

The product was finally ready for a consumer test. The test was carried out in Quebec City. Even though winter was well under way, we sold 15,000 mats in a few weeks.



Jacques Duval, race car driver, journalist, and renowned automotive columnist, photographed here in the 70s.



After signing a long-term contract with the inventors of the mat, Atlantic Promotions officially launched the Pants-Saver mat in Canada.

The spokesman for French advertising was none other than Jacques Duval, whose reputation was well established in the automotive world. On the English side, it was Nick Hollinrake, a popular announcer with CFCF-TV, who was given the job of praising the merits of this innovative mat. As of the fall of 1982, more than 200,000 units of the mat had been sold.

In the years that followed, sales reached more than 500,000 units nationwide annually.

However, in the late 80s, competitors put products on the market similar to the original Pants Saver mat. A lawsuit was then filed against these competitors, but even though the mat was patented, API lost the case. The judge admitted that API and the inventor of the mat had, «demonstrated great mechanical engineering» with their product.

A few years later, API bought the patent from the inventors of the product, and continued with the distribution of the mat.

# Oskar Car products



A range of winter products for automobiles, marketed under the brand name Oskar, followed the introduction of the Pants-Saver. The Oskar line included: a foldable snowbrush, an extendable snowbrush, a retractable snow shovel, ice scrapers, and more. In 2005, the range of Oskar car products, as well as the Pants-Saver mat, were sold to the Koolatron company.



**OSKAR**  
CAR CARE CENTER CENTRE POUR L'AUTO

Winter Time is Oskar Time!

**OSKAR Snow Brush**  
The big extra wide brush that folds up and is easy to store

**OSKAR Extensible Brush**  
Specially designed for minivans, recreational vehicles and big cars

**OSKAR Retractable Car Shovel**  
The large size snow shovel that is easy to store and does not rust

**OSKAR**  
CAR CARE CENTER CENTRE POUR L'AUTO

Trunk-EEZ®

TRUNK ORGANIZER  
PREVENTS ITEMS FROM SLIDING IN YOUR TRUNK

**OSKAR**  
CAR CARE CENTER CENTRE POUR L'AUTO

Dirt Guard  
Clothes Protector

REFLECTIVE STRIPS FOR ADDED SAFETY  
FITS MOST VEHICLES  
UNROLLS EASILY

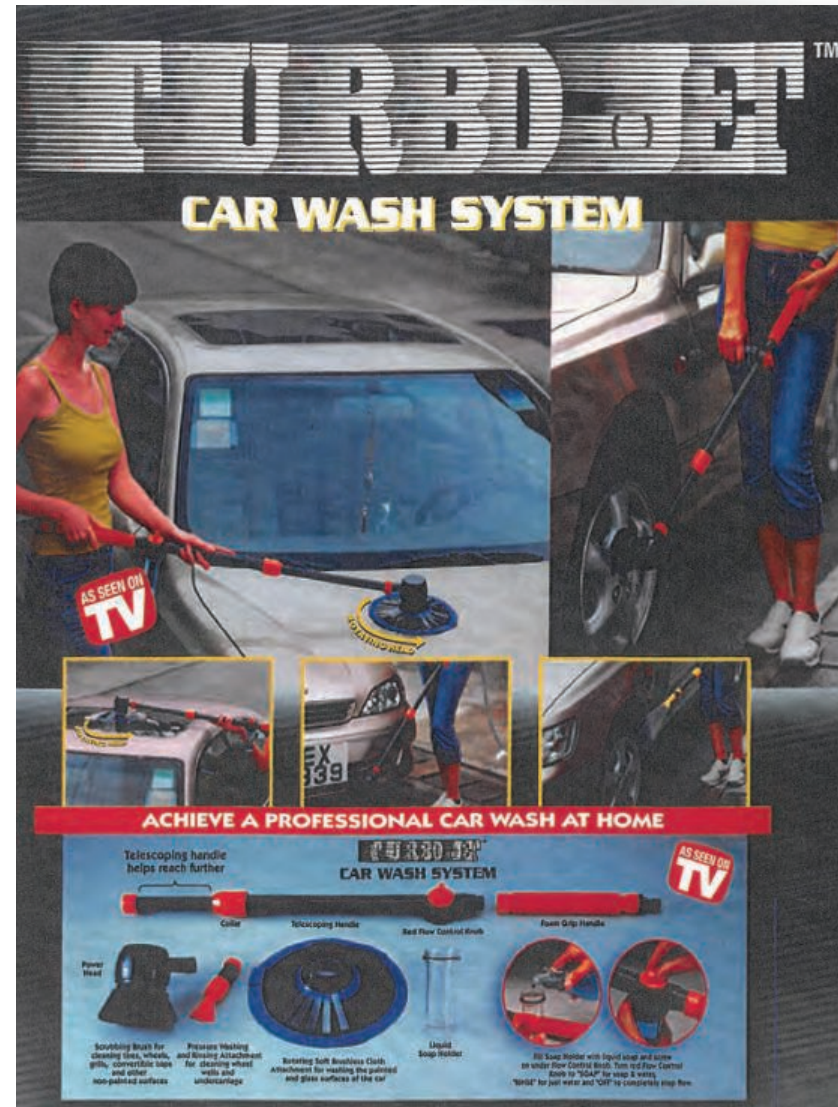


# The JETX

On May 24, 1984, we had 35,000 units of JET-X car soap spray in inventory.

Three days after the beginning of our TV advertising campaign, we were 15,000 units short of the item.

JET-X was an immediate success that outperformed our most optimistic forecasts.



# And the Turbo-Jet

Spotted at a trade show in Frankfurt, the Turbo-Jet, a car wash system for professional cleaning at home, also had its heyday with over 1 million units sold. A deluxe version of TURBO-JET was also launched.

**« You have to become  
master of your own destiny »  
- Jacques Gatién**



**1985**

# Birth of the Starfrit Brand

Evolution of the Starfrit logo from 1985 to 2015



*In the mid-80s, Atlantic Promotions successfully launched the STARFRIT and OSKAR product ranges. The loss of the T-Fal and Krazy Glue contracts were tough lessons. Owning your own brands and products is essential to ensuring the long-term success and profitability of a company like ours.*

Today, Atlantic Promotions is a company recognized for its innovation and its products, and also for its expertise in creating strong brand names. The Starfrit brand is a good example.

Launched in 1985, this product range has continued to grow and earn the trust of consumers, and gain in popularity.

The first two products in the Starfrit range were the fry cutter and the rotary chopper.

"The fry cutter was our star product," explains Jacques Gatién.

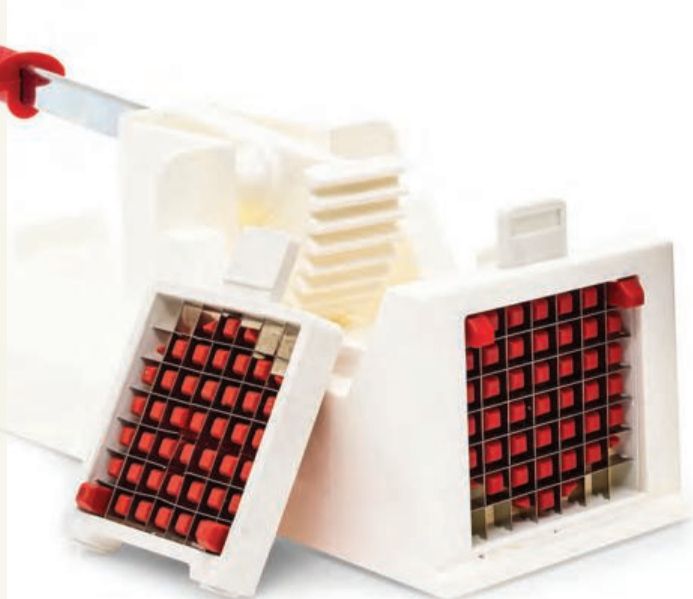
"STAR, FRITES" (french word for fries)...this was how the Starfrit name was born.

The entrepreneur remembers the day he made the discovery as if it were yesterday. "I liked the fry cutter the very first time I used it. The centrifugal force of the lever system required much less effort, and the suction base made it possible to keep the apparatus secure in place. Another advantage of the fry cutter: it's quicker and safer than a knife."

## Did you know that?

*IN THE EARLY 2000S, WE CARRIED OUT SEVERAL MARKET STUDIES ON THE STARFRIT BRAND'S REPUTATION AND CONSUMERS' SATISFACTION WITH THE COMPANY'S PRODUCTS. WE'RE PROUD THAT OUR BRAND NAME HOLDS 95% OF THE POPULARITY IN QUEBEC AND 79% IN CANADA.*

*FOLLOWING THESE EXCELLENT RESULTS, WE DECIDED IN 2002 TO LAUNCH A NEW CATEGORY OF PRODUCTS UNDER THE STARFRIT BRAND: COOKWARE AND KITCHEN TOOLS WILL FROM NOW ON BE SOLD UNDER THIS WELL-KNOWN BRAND WITH A RENOWNED REPUTATION.*



The fry cutter and the chopper were here to stay. They are still part of the extensive Starfrit family.

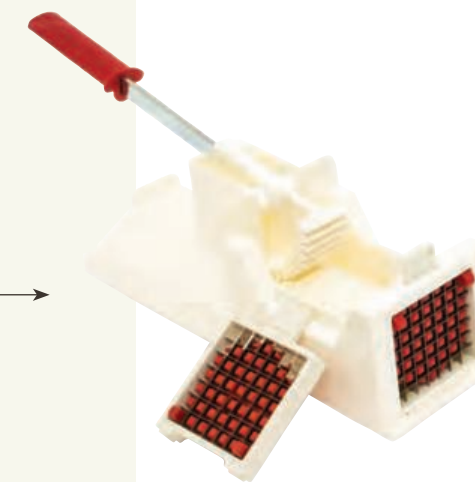
Before long, this range was enhanced with an array of cooking tools for easy meal preparation.

During one of his many trips to Europe, Jacques Gatién, as usual, took the time to visit department stores to see the latest trends and maybe make some interesting discoveries too.



The fry cutter through the years, from 1985 to 2015

1985



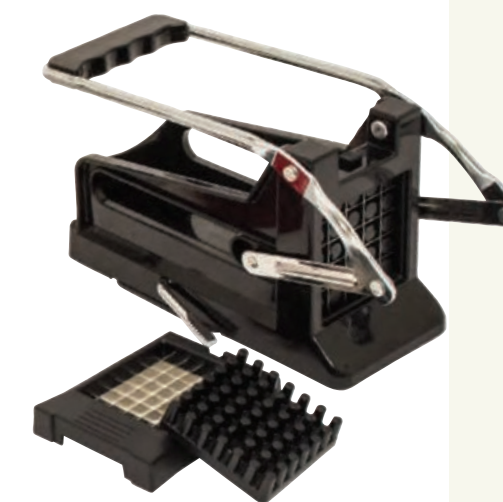
1990



2004



2015





During one of his many trips to Europe, Jacques Gatién, as usual, took the time to visit department stores to see the latest trends and maybe make some interesting discoveries too.

While in England, he visited Selfridge's department store, and was attracted by the packaging and the concept of the section belonging to the WL company. He bought a can opener, the LIFTOFF, and discovered that this product was a best seller. He had the WL company researched, and then we got in touch with an Australian inventor. The inventor redirected us to a Hong Kong trading company. Mike and Kremmel, which held the world rights for the can opener in question.

All of this research paid off. Jacques Gatién went to meet William Levine (now deceased), the owner of WL, who was also an entrepreneur and promoter.

Mr. Levine showed Jacques Gatién the Miracle Can, but Mr. Gatién was more impressed by another can opener called the MAGICAN. The patented mechanism of the Magican removes the lid of the can without having to touch it.

It was December, 1986. To secure the distribution in Canada, Jacques Gatién did not hesitate to confirm an initial order of 100,000 units.

As with other products, a promotional campaign followed, and the success was overwhelming.

Once again, Jacques Gatién's efforts were fruitful.

Over the years, the product has evolved; its design and packaging have changed, and so too has its name. For several years now, the MAGICAN has gone by the name MIGHTICAN.

This product is among one of the oldest sold by API since it went into business. It has been part of the Starfrit range for almost 30 years. It ranks first in sales statistics for can openers in Canada.



It is considered a flagship product in the STARFRIT range, with over 300,000 units sold year in, year out.

Over the years, new openers have been added: the LITTLE BEAVER and the SECURIMAX AUTO, both equally popular among consumers.

In 30 years, some 3,500 different products have been sold under the Starfrit brand in kitchen tools and gadgets, cookware and food storage. Some have been very successful, while others have not, but most of them have allowed the brand to win acclaim and achieve quite a reputation in Canada and even internationally.

Launched in 1992, the Apple Peeler became a classic in our collection. Over the years, we have changed its appearance to keep up with the latest trends. In 2014, the fifth version was available to consumers. Similarly, food choppers, mandolins, graters, salad spinners and chopping boards have been part of our regular line of products for many years.

The apple peeler was discovered at the Macef Fair in Milan (International Home Show).





The Starfrit Gourmet set, **launched in 1993**, was also a big hit with Canadian consumers. This complete culinary decoration kit sold more than 214,000 units in its first year. The Gourmet brand from Starfrit is now sold in specialized kitchenware shops.

Meanwhile, the Citrus Express and the Rotato are two examples of products that showcase the brand outside of Canada.

In the early 90s, an inventor knocked on the door of Atlantic Promotions, and wanted to show us a prototype. It consisted of a sheet metal box and a curved blade. The gentleman claimed to have revolutionized the way we cut grapefruit.

At the time, the only tool that came close was the filleting knife, which could only partially do the job.

The prototype he showed us didn't work properly, and his demonstration was not very convincing. So we asked the inventor to refine his idea further.

The second prototype proved to be a better version, but we decided to hire a professional designer to redesign it.

The result was the Citrus Express from Starfrit.

After a successful introduction into the Canadian market, we decided to entrust the U.S. distribution to a TV promoter named Emson. The Emson team quickly became one of our first international successes. In the first year, two million Citrus Express units were sold in the United States. The product was even endorsed by the Citrus Growers Association in the USA, which found the product amazing.

The Citrus Express was only a part of our product line for five or six years.

Jacques Gatien maintained that if API had had a strong, well-established sales structure in the United States at the time, the Citrus Express would have had a much longer life.



### Têtes d'affiche

■ L'entreprise Les Promotions Atlantiques, de Longueuil, vient de remporter des médailles d'or et d'argent (catégorie arts ménagers) à l'occasion du Salon International des Inventions de Genève, pour son coupe-pamplemousse Citrus Express Cutter et son éplucheur de pomme de terre, de fruits et légumes Rotato (de marque Starfrit). En recevant ces prix, le président et fondateur de l'entreprise Jacques Gatien, a rappelé que le mérite revenait à ses inventeurs, Michel Gingras et Gilbert Daoust (Citrus Express Cutter) et l'inventeur Pierre Tardif et le concepteur He Shen Long (Rotato).



**Le Citrus Express Cutter n'a pas de frontières!**

Starfrit, l'une des marques de commerce les plus connues de Promotions Atlantiques inc., annonce que son fameux coupe-pamplemousse révolutionnaire, le Citrus Express Cutter, défie toutes les prévisions de ventes internationales. Rien de tel pour couper les agrumes en quartiers parfaitement égaux! Vendu aux États-Unis depuis le début de 1998, le Citrus Express Cutter connaît un succès phénoménal: près de trois millions d'unités ont été vendues depuis son arrivée sur le marché américain. Le Citrus Express Cutter est fait de plastique de haute qualité et sa base caoutchoutée est antidérapante. Prix de détail suggéré: 19,99 \$.

Pour tout renseignement supplémentaire: 1-800-240-6010.



# The Rotato



As for the Rotato, one day one of our suppliers and close associates in Asia showed us a peeler that was ideal for every type of potato, and for most fruits and vegetables as well. The sample didn't look like much, but the product was a real innovation.

API entrusted a design firm to rework the peeler. Besides the aesthetics and the motor, the biggest challenge was to make the arm fairly flexible so that it could handle any type of potato. Despite our designer's best efforts, it was Mr. Patrick Choy (a supplier and a friend of Jacques Gatien) and some Chinese engineers who found the solution an adjustable arm. For the blade, which had to be high-performance, we turned to the Gillette company.

With 430,000 units sold in Canada, the Rotato was a success. Jacques Gatien and API decided to market it in the U.S. A distribution agreement was made with the American promoter Telebrands. In the two years following the launch, more than 5 million Rotato units were sold to our neighbours south of the border.

Unfortunately, a dispute between the two companies ended the agreement, and the developer, tried to double-cross us and get his supply directly from China.



# Montreal National Home Show

Jacques Gatien and his team have been exhibitors in numerous consumers shows over the years. It's always exciting for us to demonstrate new products directly to consumers.

In Montréal, the National Home Show was a perfect showcase to have our finger on the pulse of our consumers, and receive direct feedback, both positive and negative, about our products, their usefulness, their design, their colour, and their price.

Jacques Gatien, a demonstrator at heart, has time and time again demonstrated the benefits of his products at trade shows and sometimes even at retail stores to get the public's initial reactions. As he puts it, it often offers a chance to find out what the best selling features are, just like with a focus group. During demonstrations of the Fibro-Contact mop at the Home Show, we noticed that consumers considered washing walls with it, and this feature would even convince them to buy it. These types of observations were very helpful when it came time to making the commercial. Similarly, in 2002, the success of the cast aluminum frying pans at the Home Show convinced us that we had a winning product in hand.



## Did you know that?

DESIGNED AND MANUFACTURED IN QUÉBEC, THE BLACK NYLON TOOL RANGE IS API'S ALLTIME BEST-SELLING PRODUCT IN TERMS OF UNITS. NEARLY 15 MILLION OF THESE UTENSILS HAVE BEEN SOLD WORLDWIDE, INCLUDING TO T-FAL FRANCE, WHO WAS ONE OF THE DISTRIBUTORS.



In 2010, Starfrit had its 25th anniversary, and had sold over 100 million products.

The achievement was marked by a major promotional program. Consumers were extremely pleased to be able to purchase an assortment of products at 1985 prices.

Today the Québec trademark is registered in Canada, the United States, and in most countries in Europe and Asia.



Jacques Jr. Gatien, Gilles Gosselin, vice president general manager, Jacques Gatien et Eric Gatien.



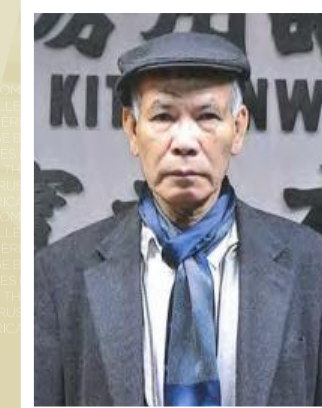
A champion when it comes to innovation, the STARFRIT brand name is a winner!



« **Your innovative ideas never exhaust.** »

– So Shun

## Congratulations for the 50th Anniversary of Atlantic Promotions Inc.



MR. SO SHUN  
GENERAL MANAGER  
KI MEE METAL & PLASTIC  
FACTORY LIMITED

*Hong-Kong, May 2, 2014*

Cher Jacques,

Pleas accept my hearty congratulations for the 50th Anniversary of Atlantic Promotions Inc. We understand that building such a sizeable business and keeping it as sustainable growth for 50 years and more is definitely not easy. You have made it happen!

I remember we first met in 1986 through the introduction of Mr. Hans Kremmel, Mr. Michael Levene, Mr. Bruce Cripps and Mr. Paul Cheung. Immediately after the introduction, we started to have some concrete business discussions. As a result, we received an order from you for almost 100,000 pieces of MagiCan can opener in December 1986. It was a huge success for you in marketing the MagiCan can opener. Next year in 1987, you placed us an even bigger order for 140,000 pieces. It had become a very successful product in your famous Starfrit line for many years. Afterwards, you gave the can openers a new look, re-designed them and developed the Securimax, the MightiCan and the Little Beaver in 2000 which are still sold very well on the market. Our other products like the Supreme Slicer, MagiTwist Jar Opener, Corkscrew, Garlic Machine, Potato Chipper, etc. are supplementary to the Starfrit line. Other than Starfrit, we understand your Heritage and Lock & Lock brands are also well recognized in the Canadian and Global markets.

You used to travel to Hong Kong twice every year to develop new products. In your visit, you have shown to us that you are an expert in marketing with full of business instinct. Your innovative ideas never exhaust. You know the Canadian and Global markets extremely well. You know exactly what the markets need and how to launch a new product successfully. Meeting you is a great learning process. We fully enjoy working with you and your team.

Although I didn't understand your English conversation too well, I could get your meaning pretty well by your facial expression. It didn't take too long to come into mutual agreements.

In the early years, you liked going with us to the Lei-yue-mun Fishing Village in Hong Kong after business discussion. You were a big fan of the gigantic fish, shrimps and crabs which I ordered specially for you. Those were the days when all of us were younger and could enjoy all different varieties of food and wine. I sincerely hope that your health keeps going well and you continue to enjoy your life.

We appreciate your business and the friendship we have built in many years based on mutual trust, sincerity and honesty. We do hope our business and friendship will continue to grow in many years to come.

Best wishes from your friend in Hong Kong.

So Shun

# Congratulations for the 50th Anniversary of Atlantic Promotions Inc.



**« I have always admired your guts to back the launch of our products with tv-promotions. »**

– Hans Kremmel



MR. HANS KREMME  
PRESIDENT  
IBL COMPANY LIMITED

*Dear Jacques,*

Hearty congratulations to the 50th anniversary of Atlantic Promotions.

It has been a great pleasure to work with you for the last 30 years now. During this period I have learned to appreciate you as a most creative, courageous and reliable business partner and friend. Business is people and you are definitely one of the few men it is a joy to do business with.

I have always admired your guts to back the launch of our products with tv-promotions as well as your ingenious creativity like your idea of developing the Little Beaver can opener.

We shared many memorable times and moments like our stay at the Hotel L'Abbaye de Talloires at Lac d'Annecy and at the Frankfurter Hof during the Ambiente.

Your generosity and kind hospitality made my trips to Montreal an unforgettably interesting and enjoyable experience despite the arctic temperatures when visiting in winter.

I also fondly remember our jolly, yet most creative never ending sea food lunches supported by unlimited quantities of the best French Chablis at the fish market in Lei Yu Muen in Kong Kong together with So Shun of Ki Mee and my partner Paul Cheung.

We had a lot of fun and success together, laughed a lot and your tremendous sense of humour was always highly appreciated by all of us.

I wish you and all at Atlantic Promotions lots of health, happiness and success for the next 50 years.

Yours ever

Hans

## A Great Honour



*Jacques Gatién is responsible for T-FAL's success in Canada. Mr. Gatién and his Canadian sales team increased T-FAL's sales from \$8 million in 1984 to \$22 million in 1993. Atlantic Promotions tripled T-FAL Canada's sales in one decade.*

For this major accomplishment, and on the recommendation of the senior management of the Groupe SEB, owners of T-FAL in France, JACQUES GATIEN was named Chevalier de l'Ordre National du mérite by President François Mitterrand on **May 12, 1995**.

A ceremony for the presentation of the medal for this honour was held in France but Mr. Gatién was not able to attend.

Until **2009**, the medal had never been presented to Jacques Gatién, Mr Gatién had only received the certificate.

The Ordre National du mérite was contacted, and our president was decorated with the medal at a formal ceremony held at the Consulate of France in Montréal on **April 16, 2009**.



Mr. Jacques Gatién et Mrs. Hélène Bouchard

# The Famous OSKAR Broom



*Maintaining good business contacts has always been and will always be extremely important to Jacques Gatién. It is a basic principle that he instills in all of his colleagues*

The Oskar broom is a good example of what maintaining excellent business relations can do for a company.

In 1986 the Freudenberg Group (FHP), with whom we already distributed a range of products (VILEDA), introduced us to one of its customers, for whom (FHP) produced a significant amount of broomsticks.

During his visit of the customer's factory, Jacques Gatién was shown a patented new angle broom which allowed the user to reach areas that were hard to get to with traditional brooms. This piqued the entrepreneur's interest.

The entrepreneur was disappointed, however, when upon his return to Montreal. The marketing team found nothing particularly exceptional about the product, and its suggested retail price of \$10 was grossly over inflated.

Despite his team's reluctance, the entrepreneur was not discouraged, and insisted that focus groups be conducted in order to better evaluate the product's potential. His "suspicions" were confirmed, right from the first discussion group. The participants in this group loved the broom, and they all wanted to keep it at the end of the meeting!



The next step was to find a name for this broom. Initially, the idea to use the name "butler" was proposed. Then came the name OSKAR and it was accepted. As Jacques Gatién said with a laugh, "In Quebec, we all have an Uncle Oscar somewhere in the family!"

Once again, Mr. Gatién was right. We were off to a flying start with the Oskar broom. It sold over 500,000 units in its first year on the market, and sales volume was maintained for the next 10 years.

For several years, the story of the Oskar broom was the subject of a case study at the HEC de Montréal. This product is a perfect example of marketing success.

The major factors of its success were:

- **We succeeded in customizing a broom;**
- **We transformed this broom into a colourful object with good design;**
- **We managed to sell it to consumers for more than \$10, while at the time a standard broom sold for only for \$0.99;**

From a marketing point of view, this product met the following fundamental criteria:

- **A good product**
- **A good price**
- **Good advertising**
- **Good distribution**

From that moment on, we could say that API was considered a major player in the cleaning category with the Bee Mop, the Oskar broom, and the Vileda products.

Our company was now competing with multinationals like Rubbermaid.



## Did you know that ?

IN EARLY 1990S, API PARTNERED WITH THE BÉLAIR FAMILY BY PURCHASING A 51% INTEREST IN TECHNISEAL PRODUCTS INC. THIS TRANSACTION WAS PART OF THE API'S ONGOING DIVERSIFICATION PLAN.

TECHNISEAL SOLD PRODUCTS FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND TREATMENT OF ASPHALT, COBBLESTONE, AND WOOD, AMONG OTHERS. THEY WERE HIGH QUALITY, INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS, AND API SAW A GREAT GROWTH OPPORTUNITY THERE.

IN THE YEAR FOLLOWING THE TRANSACTION, WE STARTED ADVERTISING TECHNISEAL PRODUCTS ON TV.

UNFORTUNATELY, DESPITE THE ADVERTISING, SALES MISSED THEIR TARGETS BY A WIDE MARGIN.

WE QUICKLY REALIZED THAT THIS TYPE OF PRODUCT WAS INTENDED MORE FOR SPECIALIZED PROFESSIONALS THAN REGULAR CONSUMERS.

API GOT OUT OF THIS PART OF THE BUSINESS SEVERAL YEARS LATER.



# ABFLEX™

**THE RAPID ABDOMINAL DEVELOPMENT MACHINE!**

The no.1 exerciser in the U.S. infomercial industry!  
 Complete system with a 3 minute a day program to set a flatter and firmer stomach.  
 Features 18 different resistance adjustments to individualize each workout to a different fitness level.  
 FREE bilingual instructional video including an aerobic program.  
 FREE bilingual instructional guide including complete exercising programs.

**EASY TENSION ADJUSTMENT**  
 Each workout may be adjusted to individual fitness level

**AS SEEN ON TV**

Stomach Crunch    Side Crunch    Chest Crunch

In the mid 90's, we knew that the days were numbered for the end of the T-FAL distribution agreement. As a matter of fact, the SEB Group, owner of the T-FAL brand, had already informed API of its intention to take over the marketing and distribution of its products in Canada.

Incidentally, Jacques Gatien admitted many years later, based on the loss of \$25 million in sales, that he should have reduced the size of Atlantic Promotions straight-away.

Instead, he made the decision to invest his heart and soul (and money) into a business model that was growing in the United States, direct sales through infomercials.

For our neighbours south of the border, infomercials were all the rage. Promoters like Guthy Renker knew a good thing when he saw it, and some products, like personal exercisers, were a great success.

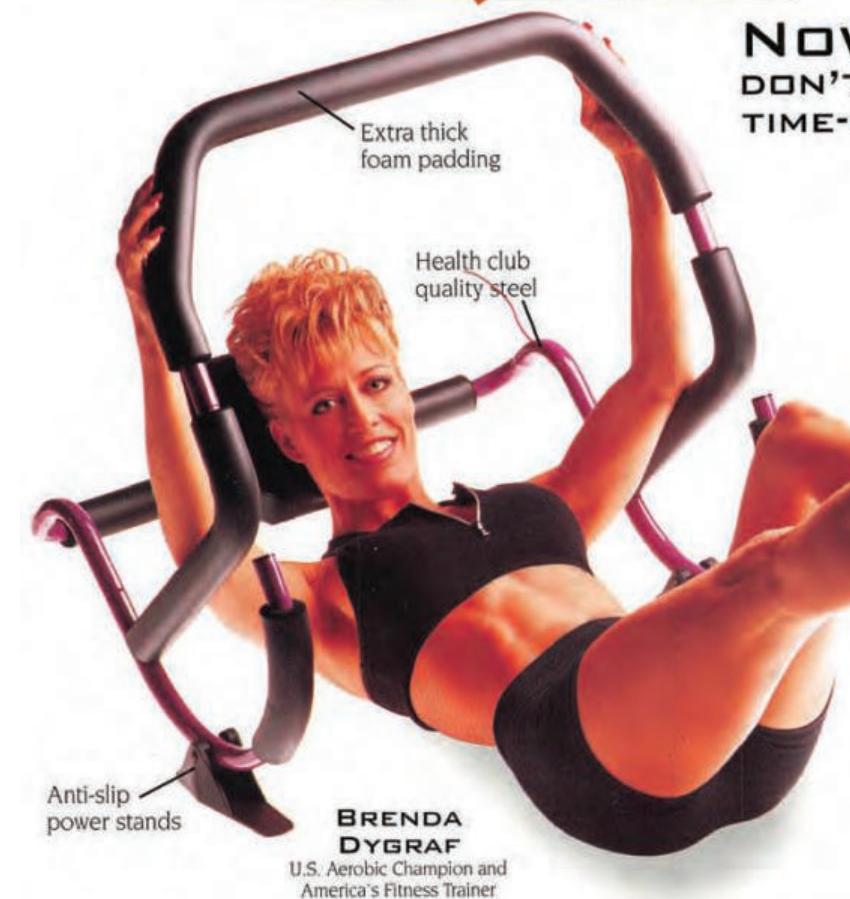
Atlantic Promotions, through its Atlantel division, became an infomercial specialist in Québec.

After some less than successful tests with, among others, the bean bag chair, we witnessed the launch of the first product in the exerciser category: the Ab Flex. This abdominal exercise apparatus was an immediate success. Its sales from infomercials totalled \$2 million in the first three months. It was as if the baby boomers, who were then in their mid-thirties, all felt the need to strengthen their abs at the same time to prevent the onset of middle-age spread.

# AB Roller™ PLUS



**NOW AB WORKOUTS DON'T HAVE TO BE DIFFICULT, TIME-CONSUMING OR PAINFUL.**



Next came to Ab Roller. It achieved even greater success. The advertising of the product was so powerful that customers were snapping them up in record numbers. For nine consecutive months, Atlantel sold 20,000 units for 2 million, per month.

In 1997, Atlantel reached \$20 million in sales—a record. The future looked promising. As a matter of fact, this division recovered most of the sales that were lost because of T-FAL.

It was a success.

Business was going well for this division until me too (copied) products made their way into Canada via the grey market. The grey market was made up of American promoters who were trying to get rid of their surplus inventory in Canada by selling their products at a cheaper price.

From this moment on, the tide turned.

It should be pointed out that the main difficulty with infomercials was the short life span of the products. The sales curve showed a very rapid upward momentum, but one that also declined very quickly. Products were quickly replaced with novelty products which were supposedly more innovative than their predecessors.

In 1998, Atlantel's organizational structure consisted of an executive director, a vice president of sales, a vice president of marketing, brand managers, and a sales team.

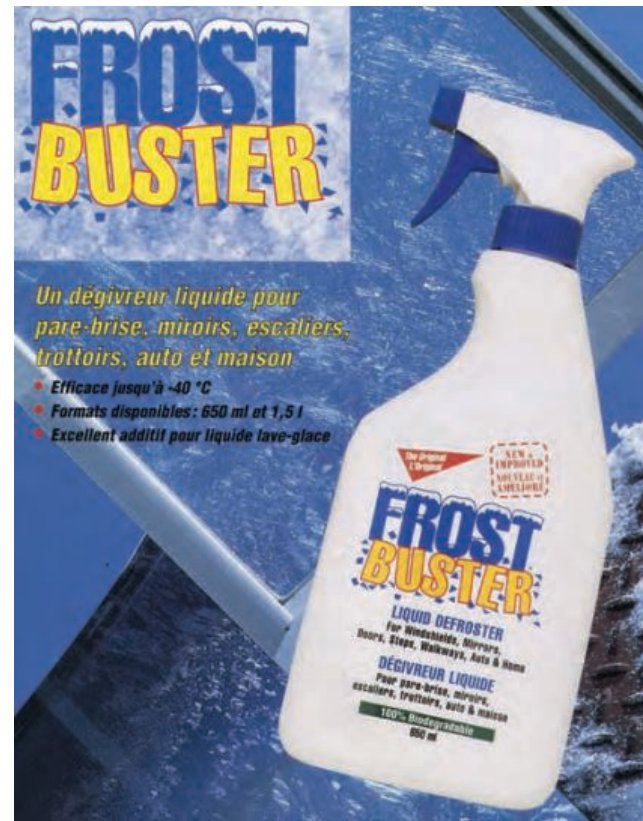
This team had to deal with a considerable mandate. Replacing the \$20 million from the sales of products valued at over \$100 per unit with products whose prices ranged from \$10 to \$20. We also knew that big selling products like the AB FLEX and the AB ROLLER were isolated cases in this industry. If they are lucky, a company comes across a product with that level of success once every 15 years.

Subsequently, Atlantel had its own share of challenges: its sales diminished significantly, its inventories grew, and its line of credit was maxed out.

Atlantel desperately needed to do something.

This was to be the beginning of a major restructuring within the Atlantic Promotions group.

This restructuring, which extended over a period of seven years, meant difficult decisions for API'S president and his team, but crucial for the future of the company.



## The Buster Family

Around 1994, Jacques Gatién saw an advertisement on television praising the merits of a new product: a windshield defroster.

A few squirts of this product would be enough to defrost your windshield in record time. With the winters we have, there was a definite need for this type of product. It was a great idea!

Intrigued, the entrepreneur asked his marketing vice president to meet with the Roberts On Guard company, located in Toronto, to negotiate an agreement.

The following year, API launched the Frost Buster with great fanfare.

In the first year, more than 400,000 units of the product were sold, including over 200,000 units at ZELLERS alone.

The following year, other products from the same family were launched: BBQ Buster for cleaning BBQ grills, as well as the Pool and Patio Buster. These products, however, did not achieve the same level of success.

The year of the launch, the weather was at its worst. The following winter was particularly mild, and sales of the FROST BUSTER slowed considerably. The success of seasonal products is often influenced by the weather. Just one season of uncooperative weather could jeopardize the future of a seasonal product.

In the end, despite some ups and downs, Atlantic Promotions kept these seasonal products in their product lineup for a several years.



## The Hertel Story



While he was running an errand in a Provi-Soir convenience store in Boucherville, Jacques Gatién spotted a cleaner on a shelf with the name HERTEL PLUS.

As indicated on the label, this all-purpose cleaner was a uniquely Québec product manufactured in Québec by Les PRODUITS ARSENAULT LTÉE.

Back at the office, Mr. Gatién asked his director of finance to contact our acquisitions broker, Price Waterhouse Coopers, to find out more about the company and its product which, according to him, was not yet widely distributed.

A meeting was arranged with the Arsenault family. M. Gatién found himself in somewhat familiar territory with the members of the family. During the discussions, he realized that he had crossed paths with the father and company founder, Roland Arsenault (who passed away in 1982), when they were both doing demonstrations at trade shows. Mr. Arsenault was selling an ointment that he had developed himself. Later, while washing his car, the Québec entrepreneur came up with the idea that he could create an all-purpose cleaner. It would put an end to the accumulation of clean-



ing containers! At first, the cleaner was bottled by hand in the family garage at the family home on Hertel street in Sainte-Foy, which is where the name of the product comes from.

The discussions between the two parties eventually led to a transaction. In April, 1990, API acquired Produits Arsenault Itée, the maker of HERTEL cleaning products.

New line extensions were eventually added to the original HERTEL multi-purpose cleaner: HERTEL EFFEX, GERMEX, HERTEL PLUS and others. This division located in Québec City, had a dozen employees. Milan cream soap and products from the BUSTER range were also manufactured there for several years.

At that time of the acquisition, Les Produits Arsenault, had total sales of \$3 million. By the time, API sold the division to the Lavo Group in 1999 it had grown its sales to \$10 million.

## Foray into India



*In 1995, an Indian-born chemist, who worked on the development of the formula of the Milan cream soap and remained in contact with the company, met with Jacques Gatien.*

He was very impressed by the Hertel cleaner. According to him, no product as effective as this existed in India, neither the cleaner itself, nor the spray bottles that it came in. It would have been a definite novelty. He believed that Atlantic Promotions had a great growth opportunity with Hertel in India.

This chemist put us in contact with a wealthy Indian family living there who might be interested in investing in a project with us to manufacture and distribute the Hertel cleaner in India.

The negotiations led to an agreement between the two parties: Atlantic Promotions and the GIWARASKA family became partners and, as a first step, invested in the construction of a factory on site.

The project got underway, and the construction took place in a field in an industrial park where there had been an Indian cemetery many years prior. According to the Indians living in this region, the graves should have been transferred to another location for the development of the business park. The local population saw it as a bad omen. The more religious ones feigned that all of the factories that had been on these lands had closed.

Our plant suffered the same fate. We had to abandon the project for various reasons shortly after the factory opened.



Was it due to the anger of the Indian gods? Some would argue yes!

In reality, the failure occurred due to more rational causes. Despite TV advertising and special offers, Hertel sales targets in India, which we considered to be on the conservative side were never achieved.

The limited success of the product in India can be attributed to several factors. The newness of the brand name, distribution problems, the small proportion of households that could afford this kind of product and the fact that domestic maids took care of the cleaning duties in many Indian households.

All of the members of our team who stayed in India during the project came home with culture shock.

We learned several lessons from this adventure, including the importance of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the target market in order to develop an effective strategy for market penetration.

# Strategic Repositioning

*At the end of 1996, Atlantic Promotions experienced its best year in terms of business volume: consolidated sales of the group reached over \$100 million.*

Despite this achievement, profits were meagre. The group had 268 employees and eight divisions.

The following year, total sales declined by over \$25 million. Thus began a long ordeal which would last for several years.

Sales declined, the bank's line of credit was at its maximum, and inventories were worth over \$35 million.

A reorganization was not only necessary, but urgent. The bank supported us in our efforts, but additional guarantees were requested by the majority shareholder to maintain financing.

Jacques Gatién didn't hesitate for a moment, and put up as collateral more than \$2 million of his own personal assets to meet the bankers' demands, and prevent the worst from happening.

Subsequently, several major decisions were taken to restore the profitability of the company.

The company's mission was also redefined. The era of diversification was over. We wanted to become specialists in the area that we knew best, the kitchen.



The decision was made to sell off corporate divisions that were not related to kitchen products.

**1998** *Closure of Atlanteck and l'Avenir des oiseaux.*

**1998** *Sale of our shares in Techni-Seal*

**1998** *Giving up the division in India*

**1999** *Sale of Hertel to the Lavo Group*

**1999** *Sale of 50% of the cleaning products division to Freudenberg Household Products (FHP)*

**2000** *Merger of Atlantel and API*

**2002** *Sale of the remaining 50% of the cleaning division to FHP*

**2005** *Sale of the Oskar and Pants Saver automotive division to Koolatron*

During those years, we also proceeded with a comprehensive restructuring of the company; API became a single entity, within which marketing and sales services became centralized. We closed the Vancouver office, and we reduced the square footage of the Toronto office and relocated it.

Without listing them all, today we can say that all of the actions laid out in our 1998 Strategic Recovery Plan were followed to the letter.

Despite the sale of several divisions, strict management and sales growth in kitchen products allowed Atlantic Promotions to start turning a profit in 2002.





# 2000's



# The Brand



*In the early 2000's, our president and his marketing team visited the Housewares fair in Hong Kong.*

At one point, Mr. Gatien asked the team members to find out if they had seen Hall 7 of the exhibition.

Yes, they had paid it a visit, but they hadn't noticed anything interesting in the way of new products.

Still, the founder of API decided to go and have a look at the Hall for himself.

At the end of an aisle, he noticed a person waving a container filled with water all over the place without spilling a drop. He looked at this demonstration for a few minutes, and was then told that the container was fully sealed thanks to its silicone seal and its closure. Not only did this container not allow liquid to escape, but it was airtight, which helps keep food fresh for a longer period. In addition, it could be used in a microwave oven and was dishwasher safe.

Jacques Gatien was impressed. Especially because there was a very wide variety of these containers on display in the kiosk.

Back in Canada, a small incident reminded him of it. He splashed water on himself while taking a container of celery out of his refrigerator. So the businessman thought just how useful the airtight containers he had seen might be to consumers.



## Did you know that?

*ON AUGUST 29, 2005, HURRICANE KATRINA SWEEPED OVER THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES, INUNDATING MUCH OF LOUISIANA. A FEW WEEKS LATER, A CONSUMER WHO WAS LIVING IN THIS STATE SENT US AN E-MAIL INFORMING US THAT SHE RECOVERED A LOCK & LOCK CONTAINER FROM THE WATER AND THAT THE COOKIES INSIDE IT WERE STILL DRY.*

*ELOQUENT TESTIMONY, ISN'T IT?*



That was all it took for him to prepare a contract, and fly to Korea in the weeks that followed. He successfully negotiated a distribution agreement for Canada and the United States.

Six months later, API launched one of the largest advertising campaigns in its history for the province of Québec with a budget of over \$300,000.

Initially, dollar sales were low because the products were selling for between \$2 and \$3 each. The advertising campaign would still help sell more than 150,000 units in the first few months.

Eventually, the number of consumers would

increase as more and more people discovered and enjoyed the benefits of these high-quality containers. Despite the entry onto the market of much cheaper copies, with less sizes available, LOCK AND LOCK is still doing well, and has been part of our product range for 15 years. Over the years, several new lines of containers have been added to the original Lock & Lock product range, like the Glass, ceramic and Tritan.

# Memory of Hong Kong in 2000



MR. JAMES KIM  
PRESIDENT, LOCK & LOCK

*« Atlantic Promotions Inc. was like an elder brother for Lock & Lock Co. Ltd., from whom we learned a lot when we extended our business abroad.»*

On behalf of Lock & Lock Co. Ltd., it is with great pleasure that I send warm congratulations to Atlantic Promotions Inc. on reaching its 50th Anniversary. We have been partners of Atlantic Promotions Inc. for many years and it has been a pleasure to witness their growth and achievements over the years.

I can still vividly remember when I met Atlantic Promotions Inc. first fifteen years ago. Atlantic Promotions Inc. was like an elder brother for Lock & Lock Co. Ltd., from whom we learned a lot when we extended our business abroad. And it is not too much to say that Lock & Lock Co., Ltd.'s success story started with Atlantic Promotions.

Lock & Lock Co., Ltd. was founded in 1978 as an importer and distributor of kitchenware from the US, Europe and Japan in Korea. The company then started its own products in 1985, which led to the 1998 launch of its signature product line, Lock & Lock airtight food storage container. Since then, Lock & Lock Co., Ltd. has been grown as a global company that exports its products to more than 100 countries worldwide.

After two-year long research and development, the company launched Lock & Lock airtight food storage container in 1998. However, the product was not well received in Korean domestic market because Korea's consumers were in little mood to shop for new products, sticking with familiar imported brands when they shopped at all. The company reassessed its options, and chose a new direction. The company turned its eyes on overseas market.

Lock & Lock Co., Ltd. attended a lot of overseas exhibitions. In the meantime, the company participated in an international exhibition in Hong Kong in 2000. Like in Korea and other exhibition, people did not pay much attention to Lock & Lock food storage container. We wanted to show the benefits of its new containers somehow. So

a salesperson began to shake and juggle the container full of water. Soon a buyer came to Lock & Lock's booth.

It was Atlantic Promotions Inc. It was a stroke of luck that we met Atlantic Promotions Inc. in Hong Kong.

Atlantic Promotions Inc. showed a special interest and we had a business talk for a long time. During the talk, Atlantic Promotions Inc. gave us an advice that such totally new product was needed to demonstrated functional features to consumers specifically and to do this the product must be introduced on TV Home Shopping rather than on 15-second or 1-page advertisements. In addition, Atlantic Promotions Inc. helped Lock & Lock to make an infomercial and debut on QVC US, the largest home shopping TV channel in the US, where it became an instant hit. Then QVC in other countries and Korean shopping channels were quick to follow suit.

This how Lock & Lock Co., Ltd. gained a toehold in global market.

Congratulations again and we look forward to continuing to work with Atlantic Promotions Inc. over the coming years so that in another fifty years we are all celebrating your 100th anniversary together.

James Kim

President, Lock & Lock



Hong Kong at night.



It was in 1978 that Jacques Gatien made his first trip to China. Since then, we cannot count the number of times he has travelled to Asia. At the time of writing (April 21, 2015), he was in Hong Kong once again attending a trade show.

# T-REX Gardening Made Easy



*A designer and inventor approached us with a revolutionary leaf rake: the T-Rex 3-in-1.*

This patented rake made cleaning up leaves, branches, and twigs easier. In 2000, this Québec invention won a silver medal at the Salon de l'Innovation de Genève.

Other complementary products to this line were the extensible gutter cleaner, the collapsible wheelbarrow, and the spiral sprinkling hose.

In 2011, the gardening division was sold to a company named RCR.



MR. JON COOPERMAN  
SENIOR BUYER, HOUSEWARES  
CANADIAN TIRE CORPORATION

«The energy and enthusiasm you continue to bring around growth and innovation is remarkable and is apparent in the great team you have surrounded yourself with.»

# Congratulations on celebrating Atlantic Promotion's 50th anniversary!



Congratulations on celebrating Atlantic Promotion's 50th anniversary. This is truly an incredible achievement!

I have enjoyed working with you and your dedicated team over the 10 past years. Throughout that period, Atlantic Promotions has retained a great entrepreneurial spirit and tenacity that has enabled it to not only compete against the international "Goliaths", but continually succeed.

Your passion for product innovation, coupled by clever marketing has provided strong mutual growth for Atlantic Promotions and Canadian Tire.

On my recent trip to your office, I was fortunate to get a tour of the product showcase your team put together the breadth of items Atlantic Promotions has launched over the past 50 years. So many of them were familiar items I had in my household from Krazy Glue to Pants Saver car mats to Starfrit gadgets to the recent success of "The Rock" cookware. I had particularly fond memories seeing the Krazy Karpet, which was a favourite during the winter in our house growing up.

The energy and enthusiasm you continue to bring around growth and innovation is remarkable and is apparent in the great team you have surrounded yourself with.

I want to wish you continued success as you celebrate this important milestone.

Sincerely,

**Jon Cooperman**  
Senior Buyer, Housewares  
Canadian Tire Corporation





« The Secret is in the base. »

*After the end of the contract with T-FAL, Jacques Gatien had an idea in mind. He wanted to return to the "cookware" category, but with his own brand of products.*

So he crisscrossed the world in search of "the" innovative product in this area. He extended his visits to include trade shows and factories in Europe and Asia.

A former president of T-FAL in the United States, a friend of many years, once told him: "If you ever decide to return to this type of product, you should look at die-cast aluminum."

His friend was right. Die-cast aluminum products had already been sold in the United States, but had generally been passed up for pressed aluminum products like T-FAL in Canada.

In Europe, the retailers were all offering a range of high-quality die-cast aluminum products.

With his marketing team and his designers, the entrepreneur started looking for the perfect product to offer to Canadians. Samples from all over the world were sent to our Longueuil office for trials and testing. Every effort was made to develop the ideal product.

Jacques Gatien wanted to market a line of high quality cookware that was comparable with what was selling in Europe. At that time, European-made die-cast aluminum frying pans might have sold for up to \$200 per unit. The entrepreneur wanted to make this type of quality product available to Canadian consumers, but at a price that they could afford.

His research took two years. In 2001, he got in touch with a Japanese manufacturer that had been producing hand cast aluminum frying pans for several generations. The Japanese manufacturer made them in a factory that he owned in Xiamen, China. It was thanks to this factory that we could envisage the possibility of producing high-quality frying pans and selling them at competitive prices.

The marketing team, in cooperation with a group of designers, created, in our opinion, the ideal product: the ARTISAN frying pan.

It was Jacques Gatien himself who proudly promoted this new product on TV:

"I remember the heavy cast iron frying pan my grandmother had. Everything she cooked was delicious...even if it was a struggle to clean it!

"With Artisan by Heritage, we had the same cooking quality but without the short comings.

"With a base that's twice as thick, your cookware will never become deformed, and the non-stick coating is better protected. Die-cast aluminum, while being lighter, absorbs heat and distributes it evenly. In addition, cleaning it is so easy.

"If my grandmother had seen HERITAGE, she would have said that the secret to a good frying pan is a thick base!"

The slogan, "it's all about the base" was what consumers remembered when shopping for a frying pan.

While still in the development period, in early 2002, at a trade show, we met a Korean manufacturer who made cast aluminum products molded by machine. And the SILIPRO brand was created.

The SILIPRO and STARFRIT frying pans were launched in the fall of 2002 during a continuity program at Metro. This program created a sales record, with more than 300,000 units sold in just 12 weeks.

Since 2002, ATLANTIC PROMOTIONS has become a leader in cookware in Canada, owning its own brand names. Jacques Gatien and his team rose to the challenge, and could say it was mission accomplished.

More than 2.5 million cookware units are sold annually by the company under the brand names STARFRIT and HERITAGE.



*Artisan*

# Brilliant Idea?

*Our door is open.*



*Jacques Gatien excels in the art of showcasing brilliant ideas. He has an extraordinary ability to see, in a primitive assembly of pins and metal scraps, a finished product that has potential..*

"I'm not great at creating. But when someone comes to see me with an idea, it's my job to bring it to the market.

It's often inventors who suggest new products to us. They come to see us when they don't know what else to do, and they're financially drained. Sometimes, they may have only received a small subsidy, which is insufficient to market their idea. You have to understand that it's very expensive to develop a product. Design costs can easily reach \$50,000, and more. A plastic injection mould can cost between \$150,000 and \$300,000.

"It's because of this that the person I have the most respect for is the inventor," affirms Jacques Gatien. "Going into production takes a great deal of courage, and establishing yourself in the distribution field is not easy.



At Atlantic Promotions, our door is always open to inventors. We invest a lot of time meeting with them, and assessing their prototypes or their ideas. One good product per year is enough to justify everything else. "

Québeckers are known as "handymen", as we say. Atlantic Promotions has made many of them millionaires thanks to the royalties paid for the products sold.

In the 1980s and 1990s, API proposed to consumers eight categories of products in areas as diverse as automotive (Oskar snow brush, Pants-Saver Carpet, etc.), cleaning (Hertel, Bee mop, Vileda accessories, Oskar broom, etc.) and culinary accessories (STARFRIT). So, we were on the lookout for products that would be a good fit for these different categories.

Today, we focus our development efforts more specifically on kitchen accessories, cookware and food containers.

But we're open to any type of brilliant idea!

# The Brand RICARDO



*In September 2009, Jacques Gatien got wind that Ricardo Média Inc. had repurchased the shares of his company from Gesca. He then saw a great opportunity for Atlantic Promotions Inc.*

His idea: to offer Ricardo Média Atlantic Promotions' services for the design, marketing and distribution of a range of distinct and unique cooking products under the RICARDO brand.

At the start of 2010, a licensing agreement was signed between the two organizations. The RICARDO products would be developed together with Ricardo, his team and Atlantic Promotions.

Less than a year later, 65 products were launched with great fanfare at the Canadian Gift and Tableware Association (CGTA).

The new RICARDO line was an immediate hit. The inventories meant to meet the demand for the first six months were sold in just one month.

It was a great success for both teams working together on this project.

**In 2015**, the RICARDO range has over 175 products that are sold across Canada in just over 500 outlets.



RICARDO LARRIVÉE

« I like his business acumen, and his creativity. »

## Thank you, Jacques, and congratulations!



Jacques Gatien is one-of-a-kind entrepreneur. He is larger than life and I like his business acumen, and his creativity. He has a sixth sense for finding new things—new products that will change our day-to-day.

When I was four or five years old, Jacques was already part of my family's life. Thanks to him, I spent days, weeks, full winters sliding on my "crazy carpet"; during that time, my father saved a fortune on dry cleaning thanks to his "Pants-Saver" mats, while my mother kept the kitchen sparkling with her bee mop!

I had no idea that one day "the" man from the commercials would make me a business proposal that would let me discover a world I never knew existed.

What inspired me first and foremost was his integrity and his vision. His simplicity is an integral part of his success. With Jacques Gatien, there are never any problems—there are only opportunities. He sees success where others see failure.

At a trade show, he's formidable: nothing escapes him. Whether in Hong Kong, Frankfurt, or Chicago, being with him is a privilege. His guidance and his unique way of discovering a treasure make him a businessman who is head and shoulders above the rest.

And I cannot ignore one of his fine qualities—he loves to eat well. No matter where we are, he knows all the best places to dine—whether it's steak or sushi.

When Jacques Gatien enters your life, things change.

Thank you, Jacques, and congratulations!

**Ricardo**



The Brand

CAT CORA®

BY I/PAR

STARFRIT



## Did you know that?

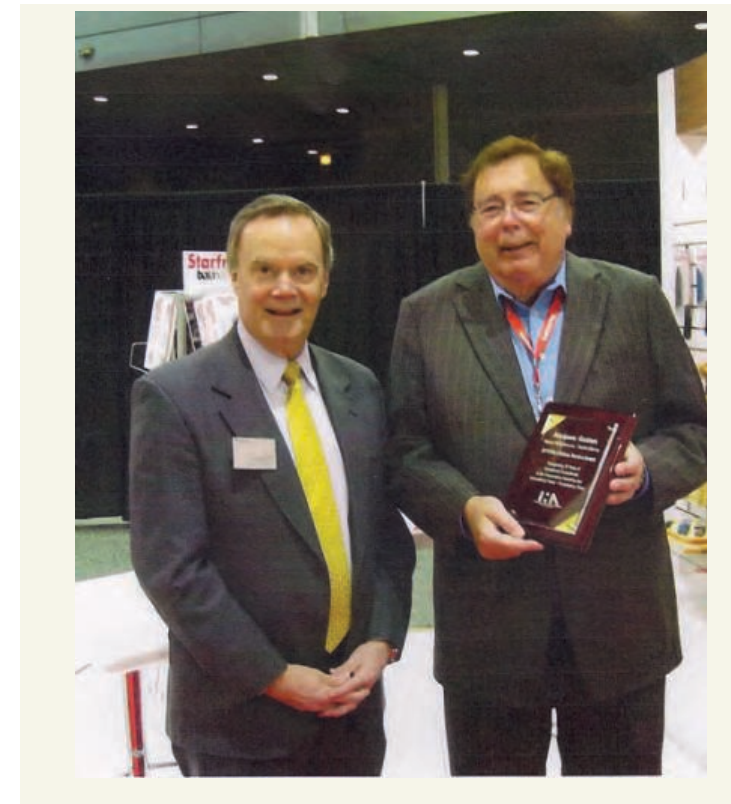
MS. CAT CORA IS THE FIRST FEMALE CHEF TO HAVE APPEARED ON THE POPULAR AMERICAN TV SHOW "IRON CHEF".

IN THE SPRING OF 2010, WE SIGNED A LICENSING AGREEMENT WITH HER TO MARKET A RANGE OF HIGH-END KITCHEN PRODUCTS BEARING HER NAME.

THE COLLABORATION LASTED FOR FOUR YEARS.



The Starfrit exhibit at the housewares show in Chicago



## Did you know that?

IN 2014, AT THE HOUSEWARES SHOW IN CHICAGO, JACQUES GATIEN RECEIVED AN HONORARY PLAQUE FROM THE IHA (INTERNATIONAL HOUSEWARES ASSOCIATION) FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS OF APPEARANCES AT THE ANNUAL FAIR.



*One of Jacques Gatien's great qualities is definitely his loyalty to his suppliers, and his desire to build a partnership with them. Whenever he visits factories, he always takes the time to explain the philosophy and culture of his company, emphasizing the importance of developing new products.*

In the past few years, we have seen the emergence of a new generation of Chinese suppliers. While previous generations were known simply as manufacturers and product copiers, today's Asian suppliers have become designers who understand the importance of not only developing innovative products, but also products of quality.

It seems that Jacques Gatien's discussions have paid off. In late 2012, a supplier showed us some new cookware.

To harden the aluminum and to ensure better adhesion of the non-stick coating, the manufacturer used a new technology borrowed from the aerospace industry: the high speed bombardment of aluminum with steel balls.

A new product was born: "The Rock".

Since it was launched, The Rock has enjoyed increasing success. Most major U.S. and Canadian retailers sell this product range. Consumers love it, and express their satisfaction in social media.

Today, it's the only range of cookware that enjoys a five-star rating on blogs and websites.

## The Brand **THE ROCK**



## Small Electrics



Panini Press with The Rock treatment.



*Atlantic Promotions' history is woven from thousands of events that all have one common denominator: innovation.*

Research and development of new products in various categories have always been at the heart of our mission.

2015 and the coming years will be no exception. We already have a major project on the drawing board whose launch is planned for early 2016.

Thanks to the huge success of The Rock, we began exploring if this technology could be applied in other categories. It didn't take long to discover that expanding the line into small appliances like skillets, woks and sandwich makers was a natural.

We plan to expand this line by developing a series of innovative, durable, small electrical appliances market under the Starfrit and Heritage brands, that provide excellent value in terms of price and quality.

This new category will enable Atlantic Promotions to offer consumers more kitchen products, both in Canada and the U.S., thus ensuring sales growth in these markets for years to come.



# Celebrations of the 50th

## Anniversary Edition of the fry pan



This limited edition "gold" frying pan has a cast stainless steel handle, induction base and surface treatment. It is a true collection piece.

# The museum's inauguration of December 10, 2014



# Press Conference of May 7, 2015



Mr. Jacques Gatién, with his children, Jacques Jr, Angélique et Éric.

# 50th Gala

September 26, 2015



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