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## Positive sales for John Lewis

John Lewis has reported positive Christmas and clearance sales for the five weeks to 2 January 2010.

Total sales were up 15.8% with like-for-likes up 12.7% compared to last year, with home sales also up 19.6%.

Andy Street, managing director of John Lewis, said: "We have seen excellent sales during Christmas and Clearance. Customers have responded extremely well to our offer and are clearly motivated by inspiring products, great value and exceptional service."

"The five-week period has seen a number of records broken. Sales surpassed the £100m milestone on four separate weeks (the most recent being week ending 2 January 2010), and we beat our previous biggest ever week from 2007 in early December. As the year progresses we expect to see a long, slow recovery, with the retailers who continue to focus on giving customers what they want prospering."

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

[www.johnlewis.com](http://www.johnlewis.com)

## Glasswells' staff put their thinking caps on

Independent furniture retailer Glasswells has raised nearly £700 for charity.

Staff from the Glasswells stores throughout East Anglia joined together at the Bury St Edmunds store to hold a charity quiz in aid of St Nicholas Hospice Care.

Held in Glasswells' Place to Eat Restaurant and hosted by operations director, Robert Hawkins, the quiz attracted 17 teams, each consisting of four members.

Money was raised from team entry fees, as well as refreshments sold throughout the evening and a raffle.

The winning team was the 'Orwell Oracles', from Glasswells Ipswich.

Paul Glasswell said: "This was our fourth charity quiz and it was a great success. I am delighted to announce that we raised £680.79 for St Nicholas Hospice Care. We hope to raise even more next year."



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

[www.glasswells.co.uk](http://www.glasswells.co.uk)

## Homewares slip in last week of year

Homewares slipped slightly in the latest BDO High Street Sales Tracker for the week ending 27 December 2009.

Despite total sales across all sectors rising 2.4%, homewares stood at -1.6%. However, some stores reported an upturn in big-ticket demand.

Don Williams, head of retail at BDO LLP said: "On the whole, mid-market retailers have had a merry Christmas. Sales for December are up 2.4% on last year and less dramatic discounting in 2009 means margins are healthier too."

"Homewares have traded particularly strongly in this last week as shoppers invest in big ticket purchases before the VAT rise. However, fewer attention-grabbing bargains to tempt shoppers through the doors combined with poor weather has made the lure of the department store hard for shoppers to resist in recent weeks."

Online sales go from strength to strength – sales have doubled on last year. With increased competition online, many retailers are set to relaunch their websites in the New Year.

So it is more important than ever to ensure websites are user-friendly and that they have a compelling online offer, if they are to build on a good December and confound the pundits' predictions of a challenging 2010."

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[www.bdo.co.uk](http://www.bdo.co.uk)

## Furniture retailer to freeze VAT

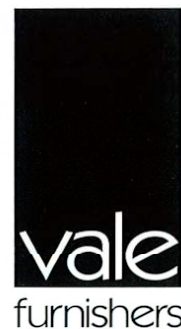
Vale Furnishers has announced that it won't be implementing the January VAT change until February to encourage footfall in the New Year.

The Aldershot based independent retailer revealed that during January 2010 it will be freezing the VAT at 15% for one month to encourage shoppers to spend after Christmas. Mark Chandler, merchandise director, explained: "I hope that by writing to our customer just after the change will make them realise

they haven't missed out and encourage them to visit the store." However, looking at the VAT change to 17.5% in a positive manor, Vale Furnishers views it as an opportunity to build on customer relationships. "I think the VAT change has presented us with an opportunity to talk to our customers again. We will always try and make the best out of any situation, if you stay positive and work hard I strongly believe that the best can be found in any situation."

"As a small family-owned

business, with a very strong team I think we are in a great position to react and change to anything the market presents us," Chandler added.



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

[www.valefurnishers.co.uk](http://www.valefurnishers.co.uk)