

Première Vision Draws a Crowd Despite Overlap With N.Y. Shows

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PARIS—There was plenty to see at the Feb. 20–23 run of **Première Vision Pluriel**, the umbrella name for the five fabric and fiber exhibitions held at **Parc d'Expositions** in Paris Nord Villepinte, in the northeastern corner of Paris.

Designers and fabric buyers browsed among the fabric suppliers showing at **Première Vision**, the yarn and fiber suppliers at **Expofil**, the makers of original prints and patterns at **Indigo**, the suppliers of trimming and accessories at **Mod'Amont**, and the leather and fur suppliers at **Le Cuir à Paris**.

According to organizers, **Première Vision** and **Expofil** drew nearly 47,800 visitors, which represented a 3 percent increase over last year. **Indigo** organizers reported a 38 percent increase in attendance to 15,838 visitors.

And while the show drew many designers and fabric buyers from top manufacturers and design houses around the world, a scheduling overlap with trade shows in New York cut into the Paris attendance of many small U.S. design companies, according to several exhibitors.

Still, the show attracted representatives from well-known U.S. labels, including **Oscar de la Renta**, **BCBG Max Azria**, **St. John**, **Juicy Couture**, **Betsey Johnson**, **Kay Unger**, **Trina Turk** and **Dana Buchman**.

Designer and fabric buyers are being more selective in the shows they attend, said Claudio Taiana, owner of **Taiana Virgilio**, a textile mill based in Como, Italy. Taiana was showing two of his fabric collections—**Linea Vanity** and **Linea Cult**—and had just returned from the **Milano Unica** fabric show in Italy and from **Première Vision Preview** in New York in January.

"We had the exhibition in New York, then Milan and now in Paris," he said. "We cannot expect our customers to go to all the shows."

Still, he said, the quality of attendees at Paris was very high, but he noted that different markets were emerging for 34-year-old **Première Vision** and 2-year-old **Milano Unica**.

"Milan is becoming more important for menswear, and Paris is becoming more important for women's," he said.

Eric Firmann from Lyon, France-based performance and

active fabric mill **Sofileta** had several appointments with U.S. customers at **Première Vision**, as well as a few appointments with California labels.

Firmann said the general mood was positive and the interest high in his smart fabrics with moisture-management, power-stretch and thermal-retention properties, as well as his fashion fabrics with metallic looks and laminated finishes.

"In Europe we have seen a better mood in recent shows than in the last few years," he said.

Traffic picked up early, right from the start, for several exhibitors.

"Today we booked a lot of appointments. It was quite a good day for us," said Sandrine Bernard, the New York-based executive vice president of Paris-based high-end lace and fabric mill **Solstiss/Bucol**, on the opening day of the show.

"Normally the first day is quiet, but by afternoon the rhythm is good," said Philippe Gonzales, a representative for Lyon-based **Komo SAS**. Gonzales said that by the end of the show, he had seen representatives from **Betsey Johnson**, **Dana Buchman** and **Kay Unger**.



FORUM SHOPPING: Forums at **Première Vision**, **Indigo**, **Expofil**, **Mod'Amont** and **Le Cuir à Paris** give visitors an overview of the shows' trends.

West Coast connections

This was the first show for **Dayna Holli Textiles**, a new Los Angeles-based print studio, according to owner Dayna Johnson, who was showing at **Indigo**. The company—which provides vintage textiles, embroideries and woven shirting fabrics—had already showed the latest collection in January at **Printsource** in New York. Johnson said she was expecting to see representatives from **BCBG** at the show, as well as **Lucky Brand**.

This was also the first time at **Indigo** for Diana Garreau, founder of the 10-year-old print studio **Garreau Designs** in Laguna Beach, Calif.

"We thought it was time to step it up a bit," said Garreau. The company employs eight artists in its two studios in Laguna Beach and in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Each print is hand-drawn and then scanned to create a "completely usable inlay," Garreau said.

When a few of Garreau's existing clients learned that the company was exhibiting at **Indigo**, they came to see the line before the show. Another client—a large manufacturer based in San Francisco—had made plans to stop by the booth at **Indigo**, she said.

Trina Turk was among the West Coast-based designers in attendance at **Première Vision**. "For us, we're very fabric-oriented—it's our bread and butter, basically," she said. "It's always good to go immerse yourself in it and get a feeling for the upcoming season. For this show, there seemed to be a clear direction."

In particular, Turk liked the fabrics in many shades of gray and a yellow/green acid shade that would work well as an accent color. Plus, "there was a ton of metallic," she said.

Los Angeles designer Randa Allen was also in attendance, on the hunt for fabrics for her contemporary collection, **Notice**, as well as her new label, **Curtsey**, which she described as "dresses, knits, prints, period."

Allen shopped the show for two days, describing it as "concentrated thinking without interruption."

"We need to get there and get the trends," she said. "We walked away feeling very positive about it."

The designer said her company frequently uses Italian, French and German fabrics in the collection. "I think it makes a difference in our line," she said. ■

Coterie

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tion Center on Manhattan's West Side because of construction at the **Show Piers**, where **Coterie** is usually held.

Bridge lines and the European Pavilion, including Italian exhibitors, remained on **Pier 90** and **Pier 92**. "People didn't think **Coterie** could work in a convention center, but it does," said Elyse Kroll, executive director of **ENK**, organizers of **Fashion Coterie**. "We had to find another home. They had these dates available, and we took them."

Approximately 18,000 visitors attended the show, which ran Feb. 20–22. This year, **Coterie** was held right after the **MAGIC Marketplace** in Las Vegas (Feb. 13–16), instead of following **New York Fashion Week**, which took place Feb. 2–9.

Normally, **Coterie** organizers prefer to directly follow **New York Fashion Week**, but the show's delayed timing was unavoidable. "We will do anything under our power to be after **Fashion Week**. It was a circumstance that was unavoidable," said Kroll, who was still happy the show missed most of the big chill that enshrouded the region for days.

The show, which included approximately 1,600 exhibitors, attracted buyers from the East Coast, including **Macy's East**, **Bergdorf Goodman** and **Barneys New York**; leading West Coast retailers **Ron Herman**, **Madison** and **Lisa Kline**; and international stores from as far away as Jakarta, Indonesia.

Kroll noted that one of the biggest trends she has seen is the desire of consumers to abandon their casual clothing and dress up.

"We were a T-shirt-driven world, and now no one is wearing a T-shirt here. Everyone is wearing a top or a dress," she said.

At **Coterie**, buyers focused on simplicity, sophistication and clean lines, said Laurie Hasson, who represents designers such as **Rachel Pally** and **Samantha Treacy**.

New resources and trends, especially in denim, were key for retailers, who found freshness in colored denim, high-waisted styles and wide-leg trousers. Dresses, knits, menswear-inspired pieces and outerwear were also important categories.

For most, quality was key. In a market driven by trends and fast fashion, finding good-quality, original designs that offered a fresh approach to dressing seemed to be the objective of retailers.

"Fantastic craftsmanship, that's what I look for," said Julie von Weller, co-owner of **Thread**, a women's contemporary boutique that carries babywear, home goods and jewelry in Winter Park, Fla. "It's always about the cut, the fit, the fabric and the integrity of the piece."



At **D&A**, the **Odd Molly** booth attracted buyers looking for unique knitwear and layered looks.

D&A – continuing forward

Designers and Agents kept its consistency in size with a much improved retailer turnout.

This February's show was the best ever, with 2,465 registered attendees and 182 exhibitor booths with 238 collections. That's a 49 percent increase in traffic over last year, when a major blizzard practically shut down the city for a few days. It's a 20 percent increase over September. Exhibitors reported a range of stores stopped by the show, held at the **Starret-Lehigh Building** in the Chelsea district. Department stores, such as **Neiman Marcus** and **Barneys New York**, stopped in. Boutiques included **Les Amis** in Seattle; **American Rag** in Los Angeles; **Caramel** in Washington, D.C.; and **Therapy** in Austin, Tex.

In addition, international retailers such as **Opaque** in Japan and **UPC** in Toronto shopped the show. "We've had more international stores here than ever before—Italian, French, German and Japanese," **D&A** co-founder Ed Mandelbaum said.

Mandelbaum and his business partner, Barbara Kramer, edit the show's entries each season, leading to a more vibrant exhibition showcasing the latest trends.

Kramer said trends for Fall '07 include strong dress silhouettes, tunics and very feminine styles—nothing hard-edged. She also noticed a return to tailoring—and not just the classic menswear suit.

Pants for Fall come in a range of styles, including high-waisted jodhpurs, thin cigarette shapes and wide bell-bottoms.

For denim, it must be premium denim made in raw denim and darker washes. Boots are key. Jewelry and handbags have gotten bigger. "Handbags are not small anymore. It's about the big status bag," Kramer said.



A bird's-eye view of **The Train** in its long aisle format, much like an actual train

The Train – adding on

Reorganization was in the air for **The Train**, launched in 2004 by **La Fédération Française du Prêt à Porter Féminin**.

This season, organizers moved their newest show, called **Platform 2**, from the **Roseland Ballroom** on New York's Upper West Side to **The Train's** location in the **Terminal Stores** on 11th Avenue, just around the corner from **D&A**.

Platform 2 was added last season for bridge and contemporary collections.

"In only its second season, we are still developing **Platform 2** and expect the show to become an important destination during **Market Week**," said Jean-Pierre Mocho, the federation's chairman, in a statement.

Exhibitors had mixed feelings about **Platform 2** being held in conjunction with **The Train**. They reported good traffic on the first two days of the show but noticed slower traffic once **Coterie** began.

Pamela Carone, owner of the **Pamela Carone Showroom** in Los Angeles, which carries lines such as **Heike Jarick** and **Viviana Uchitel**, said she thought it was easy for buyers to work the show. "There's no bad location unless you're upstairs. It's growing, and that's good and bad," she noted.

Despite some exhibitor misgivings, **The Train** reported a record number of buyers from across the United States and the world, with 3,487 visitors attending this season compared with 3,250 in September. ■

For trends from the New York trade shows, see page 9.