

Sandy Reports

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IN THIS ISSUE

SPECIAL ILOE SHOW REPORT

Dear Subscriber,

The fifth annual **International Luxury Outerwear Exposition (ILOE)** ended its three-day run last week to overall positive reviews. After interviews with a range of exhibitors, it seems expectations were kept 'cautiously realistic' leading most to be pleasantly surprised at the business generated.

Attendance was reported as down from last year, primarily due to the fact that many stores were represented by one principal rather than three or four as in past years. The majority of stores that registered did attend.

Retailers noted that they found fresh new fashion at the show. *"We went to ILOE looking for color,"* noted Marcie Rae of Marcella Furs & Leathers in Amarillo, TX. *"We have noticed an uptick in color coming out of Hollywood and felt that it would be important for this upcoming season. We found color in every single booth."*

Virginia Beach's Lowenthal Outerwear Boutique was also upbeat about ILOE. *"It is always the shot of adrenaline that we need, to look forward to another season,"* noted Sheri Mellides, owner. *"Whether the winter was cooperative or not, seeing the fashion, the new fall colors and trends, to me always gets me pumped. Best of all is seeing our great friends, vendors and fellow retailers. Sharing ideas, marketing strategies and finding new vendors at the show is what we always look forward to."*

"I thought ILOE was good," said Missy Smart of Alaskan Fur Co. in Overland Park, KS. *"I found some new vendors. I was getting a lot of work done ... I only wish they did not close at 3pm on the last day."*

From the exhibitors' side, the majority of firms reported that they did good business, with several noting they opened new accounts. While most spoke on the condition of anonymity, one chinchilla firm from Argentina, Serge Furs, said he was very pleased. *"This was our fifth year participating in ILOE,"* said Sergio Dick. *"We did business with our current accounts and wrote new business; I am very pleased."* Other exhibitors noted that they felt attendance may have been down in numbers, but business was generated with those retailers attending writing orders.

GLO at ILOE. The opening night fashion show, GLO, was a highlight. Preceded by cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, the show featured highlights of fur collections from the exhibitors. Commenting on the fashion show, Marcie Rae, who also serves as Chairperson of FICA, noted, *"The runway show is very helpful to me as a buyer. It helps to highlight the booths that I need to visit where otherwise I might walk right past them."*

FICA on site. The Fur Information Council of America (FICA) had a very active booth. Manned by Dave Sollman, Keith Kaplan and Nicole Smith, the booth showcased the designs from the Remix Design finalists. Staff greeted colleagues and gave them the opportunity to discuss the industry and the integral role FICA plays. As a result, several firms signed up as new members to show their support.

Social Media Do's and Don'ts. As reported, a seminar on Social Media was conducted by Julia Breinholt and Keith Kaplan. They provided tips on building strong and relevant content to engage clients and grow business as well as the do's and don'ts to protect these efforts and avoid litigation.

And now, to the videotape. FICA lead a video crew throughout ILOE – interviewing FICA members to share their experiences as to why FICA is important for the growth of the industry and for their business. The REMIX student winners and participants were also interviewed. That video will be used to pitch faculty and students at design schools, colleges and universities to grow future participation in REMIX. In addition, the GLO show was videotaped to showcase FICA member manufacturers participating in ILOE and to shine focus on their new fur fashions for Fall 2017. A series of videos will be produced and incorporated across FICA's FurInsider social media platforms. These videos can then be used as content and shared with industry members.

Going once - going twice. Live and silent auctions were held at the cocktail evening with the goal to raise funds for FICA and its pro-fur efforts. Generous donations of fur garments and accessories were donated by HiSo (Toronto), Serge Furs (Argentina), Musi Furs (Montreal), Chosen Furs (LA), Wolfie Furs (Montreal), Jonevon (NY), Optimal Furs (Canada), Serbos Furs (NY), Mitchie's Matchings (Montreal) and Gemmi (Finland). The industry supported the auctions with \$12,700 raised for FICA.

Scenes from ILOE



Welcome to ILOE



Registration



Pretty in pink



GLO at ILOE



Serbos Furs



Fabulous furs for him and her



Serge Furs



Rendezvous Furs

Follow up. The April 10th, 2017 meeting on certification and traceability between the large European fashion brands and representatives of IFF Americas, auction houses along with fur farmers and wild fur representatives was very successful. The fashion brands in attendance at the Chicago meeting received a fur farm tour along with a briefing on all international agreements, laws, regulations that are currently in place in North America for wild fur. The brands and representatives from the fur trade agreed to continue discussions in order to encourage transparency, traceability and the ethical sourcing of furs used in the international trade. Fashion brands in attendance were thankful for the information presented in the meeting but asked for additional information on wild fur as they continue to develop their own corporate social responsibility programs.

Regards,

Sandy Blye

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