



## WE CAME, WE SAW, WE (HOPEFULLY) CONQUERED. A RECAP OF THE CURRENT TRADE SHOW SEASON.

March, 2013 by Gus Floris

We came, we saw, we (hopefully) conquered... So went the mantra for any company hitting the Fall '13 trade show circuit. Now that we are all back at our desks, the real work begins. Overall, there seemed to be a positive state of mind around the industry, and the shows. But, as we all know too well, with all the orders that may have been received, there are much more note takers that need follow up. Some impressions from the shows... The initial thought was with Coterie being so close to Vegas, retailers would make a choice between shows creating more of a regional atmosphere between NY and Vegas. And that did seem to be the case.

Project had the opportunity to make a major statement in Vegas without any competition, but unfortunately they seriously missed the mark in the main convention center. The impression among most industry insiders, AI included, was that all attention was paid to the Tents and everything else was an afterthought. There was retail traffic and brands did business, but the lack of direction and merchandising on the show floor in the convention center proved to overshadow anything positive coming out of the show. The team at Project needs to remember that despite how busy a show may seem, if the environment doesn't speak to the brand image of their exhibitors then those exhibitors won't be happy and will look elsewhere.

Our hats go off to the ENK Women's team! There were definitely some shortfalls, but with such a quick turn around from the announcement of Advanstar purchasing ENK to the February show, they did a good job of incorporating ENK Women's into Project and giving retailers an easy grid format to navigate; bigger anchor brands sat along the walls with the smaller peripheral brands in the center. The show lost its intimate, sophisticated feel in the move, but there are pluses and minus to every decision and this was about putting everything in one central location

and making it easier for the retailers with one less venue to travel to. The one stand out at Project was the Men's Tent, a well designed, inviting space with a curated selection of fashion forward brands.

Over at the Sands Expo, you had Capsule and the Business Journal group of trade shows. Capsule continues to do their thing and deliver a great show that mixes young independent fashion brands with the more established. MRket held on to its calm, organized consistency, including their now trademark Made in Italy section. Moda rebranded itself as Stitch and The Accessories Show saw significant traffic.

Although there are still Fall '13 regional markets that will be taking place, the fall trade show season has come to an end, finishing in NY. To reinforce the positive attitude in the market, the NY shows had decent traffic, with retailers looking to buy. Of course people need to complain about something, otherwise it wouldn't be a show! The big complaint in NY was the shows being so spread out around the city and that Coterie was held in two locations (that took all of 10 minutes if you were looking to change venues via complimentary shuttle).

The biggest news of the season was the announcement by Project's founder, Sam Ben Avraham, that he is launching a new show concept for August, and his timing couldn't have been better. There are several ways to look at this, but in reality, the only way to look at it is being good for the industry. No one trade show should dominate an industry to the extent that brands have no other option. That is a recipe for disaster that can make the management team of any show complacent, as we all just witnessed at Project in Las Vegas. Liberty Fair's entrée into the market will make everyone work harder at creating the best experience for the exhibitors and the retailers.