



## TRADE SHOWS

**Good Biz at Curated Liberty Show**

By Andrew Asch | Thursday, February 25, 2016



The stylish Briggs, center left, and Thrash, to his right, at Liberty

The **Diesel** and **Will Leather Goods** brands made their debut at the recent run of the **Liberty Fashion & Lifestyle Fairs** trade show, which ran Feb. 15–17 at the **Sands Expo and Convention Center** in Las Vegas.

Sam Ben-Avraham, Liberty's founder, estimated that 45 more brands exhibited at the show compared with the February 2015 run. One of the main strengths of the show was its continued delivery of a wide range of categories, from suiting to high fashion and streetwear, which he believes keeps vendors and attendees ahead of the market.

"You see the consumer buying everything and mixing styles," he said.

Jason Bates, founder of the **Derelict** showroom, which represented brands such as **Farah** and **Holubar**, said Liberty was a good follow-up to January shows in New York. They were affected by heavy snows. The inclement weather cut into some of the shows' attendance. At Liberty, Bates caught up with the buyers that he missed in New York.

Timothy Padilla, co-owner of the **T&A Showroom**, said business at the recent Liberty seemed even compared with last year. He had more than 100 appointments during the recent run of Liberty. The business was created by setting up appointments before the show, not walk-by traffic, he said.

Retailers visiting the show included **Amazon.com**, **Zappos**, **American Rag**, **Revolve**, **Kith**, **Nordstrom** and **Saks Fifth Avenue**. Liberty also curated unique exhibitions such as **Poggy's World**, a fashion section curated by Motofumi "Poggy" Kogi, creative director of Japanese retailer **United Arrows & Sons**. **Poggy's World** made its second run at Liberty. Other sections curating unique looks included the crafts-focused styles of the **Freedom Hall** section and **The Studios**, which focuses on digital media. During the show, the **Parke & Ronen** brand introduced its first winter styles.

While many reported good business, some retailers maintained that they were being careful about their buys. **LASC**, a more than 30-year-old store headquartered in West Hollywood, Calif., was "cherry-picking" looks at the show, said Don Zuidema, a cofounder of LASC.

"Rather than buying a full collection, we cherry-pick pieces from lines that will work well with other lines. We can't bring in a bunch of stuff," Zuidema said.

The choosiness makes LASC an alternative to online retailers, he said. "Specialty stores have always been charged with the responsibility of providing a unique environment, now more than ever. We need to create an environment that will offer new experiences and alternatives," he said.



THE CHIEFS: Sam Ben-Avraham, founder of Liberty, with Sharifa Murdock, a Liberty partner