

Pool Show Attracts New Labels

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Buyers on the hunt for new labels and art-driven styles found plenty of potential at Pool.

The eight-year-old apparel and accessories show drew almost 200 brands to the Las Vegas Convention Center — about 70 percent women's and 30 percent men's.

Buyers at the show, which hosted labels like Textile Junkies, Tokidoki, Feral Childe, Rojas, Taxi CDC and Angel Court, cited the presence of young brands and emerging designers as a draw, as well as eco-friendly fashions.

"So far this is the most interesting show for new looks," said Tokyo-based buyer Ken Sugata of Marubeni America Corp., who was checking out the Skingraft Designs booth for edgy leather jackets and holster-style belts popular with celebrities such as will.i.am and Fergie from the Black Eyed Peas. "I'm looking for casual styles, and I'm finding things you don't see other places."

Pool's Cash and Carry area, which more than doubled in size to 40 exhibitors from 19 in February, had a waiting list of about a dozen brands that were unable to exhibit because of insufficient space and proved popular with retailers looking for immediate merchandise and value.

"I like the concept, since we all want quality at less expensive prices right now," said Heather Martin, a buyer for Belle Grey boutiques in Los Angeles.

Norit Dvir, a buyer for Hilton Corp. hotel retail, browsed the Bagonia booth's green handbags and accessories and said environmentally conscious merchandise was gaining in popularity with customers, regardless of economic conditions.

"Shoppers are increasingly aware of environmentally friendly brands, but they have to be fashion-forward," Dvir said.

Pool, which is owned by Advanstar, also the parent of the MAGIC and Project shows, cut exhibitor fees from \$4,000 to \$3,000 this show to lure cost-conscious labels. In addition, Pool launched a collective concept called Co-Op, a less expensive share area for exhibitors who otherwise might not have been able to afford to attend the show. The Co-Op fees ran \$1,875 a label with six brands showing in the space; nine brands showed in Pool's emerging concepts section, including Ai for Ai and Duse Dusen.