

Crossover Buying Thrives at Glow

By Andrew Asch
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A crossover market between the fashion and giftware industries is growing, according to management at the **California Market Center**. They hope the trade show **Glow** captures the potentially burgeoning market of where giftware and fashion meet.

Glow was held at the CMC's Penthouse on the building's 13th floor Jan. 19-22. Building management would not release attendance figures for the 120-booth show, but CMC General Manager John Kim was bullish enough on Glow's potential to announce the show would be held four times annually.

The show will be produced during the building's two annual gift shows held during January and July. It will also be held during the building's two major fashion markets, in March and October, attracting more retailer traffic to the building. "It's an opportunity not just for our gift tenants, but for our fashion tenants as well," Kim said. "The California Market Center is strong with fashion. If we combine synergy with gifts, it will create more resources for retailers."

Buyers from **Knott's Berry Farm**, **Wynn Hotel** and **Patty's Hallmark** browsed through Glow, according to a representative of the CMC. Retailers interviewed for this article gave the show mixed reviews.

"There wasn't much to keep me there. There were too many pop culture items," said Lisa Ackerman, owner of antique store **A&P Collectibles** based in Orange, Calif.

"It was worth the trip," said Martha Simila, owner of the **Cannon Beach West** gift shop in Cannon Beach, Ore. "The displays were beautiful and the vendors seemed to be doing well." Simila said that she purchased one order from a vendor named **Global View**.

Vendors gave good, if mixed, marks for the show. "It was worth it for me," said Carolyn West, owner of Los Angeles-based apron and glove set manufacturer **Carolyn's Kitchen**. "Most trade shows are extremely expensive, and a booth at Glow was just \$300. I covered the costs of my booth and way above that."



WHAT'S COOKIN'?: Carolyn West, owner of Carolyn's Kitchen, said traffic was slow but business solid at Glow.

West said that six specialty boutiques ordered her products, but Glow was extremely slow. "A lot of vendors closed their booths early," she said.

Owners of Los Angeles-based dog accessories company **Discolulu** said they took orders from Hawaiian and New York-based retailers they would only have met by renting booth space at Glow. "We're not disappointed at all with the connections we made," said Discolulu designer Kimmy Nguyen. "But I was hoping there would be more traffic."

Kim defended the pace of Glow's traffic saying it would take time to develop the show's format.

"It's a work in progress," he said. "It will continually evolve."

Glow seemed like a big tent that could offer space to vendors from diverse categories. Discolulu offered jewelry and fashion items for dogs, such as a sequined dog coat. Arvada, Colo.-based **Trixie n Dixie** sold shower curtains, pillows, and tins with prints bearing scenes of cowboys and the American frontier. Other vendors sold candy, lamps with figures of hula dancers, or fragrances.

John Saxtan, editor of Chicago-based trade publication *Giftware News*, said the gift industry embraced all kinds of different items. Growing gift categories included jewelry as well as accessories, furniture and games for pets, babies, and children.

An increase in fashion business was anticipated at the **California Gift Show** at the **Los Angeles Convention Center** held Jan. 21-24, where 1,600 companies exhibited. One of the largest divisions at the trade show was the fashion accessory section, where 320 booths exhibited everything from jewelry, handbags, beauty products and iPod accessories, according to Dorothy Belshaw, senior vice president of **George Little Management**, which produced the show. She said fashion accessories could be found in almost every other part of the show, too. "It's indicative of how strong it is in retail. Fashion accessories have grown steadily in the past few years," she said. ■