

HK Fashion Week

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Show Preview

Fair to feature new generation of brand name Asia suppliers



More than 550 exhibitors have signed up for the Hong Kong Fashion Week Spring/Summer, to be held from July 13 to 16 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. Fair organizer, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (TDC), says this is a record for the event and will boost its status as Asia's major sourcing fair for brand-name international fashion from a new generation of Asian suppliers.

The event's increasingly international profile is reflected in a new lineup that includes six catwalks staging designers' fashion shows and a series of seminars hosted by fashion experts from around the world. Representatives from Worth

Global Style Network, based in the U.K., and Peclers Paris of France, will speak about the latest fashion trends, while executives from the Taiwan Textile Federation will present Taiwan's newest functional fabrics.

Hong Kong suppliers will be using the event to push their new brand name ranges, differentiating themselves from low-end suppliers in neighboring mainland China. At the International Brand Collections Show, companies including Amandarling, Lafei Nier, Nakad, King Hat and Kalizz will unveil spring/summer collections. Another Hong Kong company, Butoni, will be staging a solo show. There will also be a group show hosted by Indonesian designers and two shows by the Korean Women Entrepreneurs Association.

The importance of brand names for overseas buyers has been underlined by the results of a survey indicating that more than one third of international buyers attending Hong Kong Fashion Week are looking for branded products.

Oracle Market Research, an independent survey company commissioned by the TDC, interviewed a total of 453 exhibitors and 730 buyers attending the 2003 Hong Kong Fashion Week and World Boutique.

Thirty seven percent of interviewed buyers said they placed orders on products under suppliers' brands at the fairs.

Branded products are 'powerful force'

Anthony Keung, a member of the TDC's Garment Advisory Committee said: "While Hong Kong's OEM and ODM productions are still doing well, the survey indicates that our branded products stand a good chance of developing into a powerful force in the world market."

According to the survey, Hong Kong manufacturers are well aware of the importance of brand development. About half of the manufacturers interviewed have already developed their own clothing brands and another 25 percent are planning to do so in the next three years.

Hong Kong exhibitors indicated that they will increase investment in advertising their brands in the next three years, and the Chinese mainland tops their list of markets for brand promotion, followed by Hong Kong, Europe and the U.S.

International representation at the event will be wide, said the TDC, with exhibitors from mainland China Taiwan, India, South Korea, Macau, Thailand, France, the U.S., Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Hong Kong. At the International Fashion Designers' Showcase, there will be designers from Hong Kong, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

"Hong Kong Fashion Week for Spring/Summer provides an immediate platform for sourcing as well as collecting market intelligence and trends," said a TDC spokesman.

Last year's Hong Kong Fashion Week for Spring/Summer, held in July, attracted 12,858 buyers, 10 percent lower than 2002, but considered a success in the light of the SARS scare at the time. A total of 517 exhibitors from 11 countries and regions participated in the fair.

The TDC's director of exhibitions, Benjamin Chau, said buyer numbers from mainland China were particularly strong, up 30 percent in 2003 against 2002. "Hong Kong is an important trade fair venue for mainland buyers. Many buyers come to place orders for Hong Kong-designed fashion, which is increasingly popular among mainland consumers," said Chau.

The top 10 visitor origins at the fair, not including Hong Kong, were mainland China, Japan, the U.S., Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and the U.K.