



WWD WEDNESDAY

Sportswear

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Colors, Classics Top Dallas FIG

By Holly Haber

DALLAS — A rainbow of colors and prints scored orders for spring and summer at Fashion Industry Gallery, the downtown venue here focused on contemporary looks that ended a five-day market Jan. 28.

Thirties-influenced dresses saw action, while Empire and trapeze silhouettes continued their strong run in draped knits and breezy chiffons. Clean classics with a little zip also did well, such as tailored sheaths detailed with belts and pockets or bold prints.

Retailers mostly wrote orders for deliveries from February through May. They also were on the lookout for fall trends, such as cashmere sweaters.

"We were very happy...We had our largest exhibitor attendance for a January show," said Shelli Mers, FIG director.

Sales representatives worried about negative economic news said they were surprised that retailers reported good business and left orders at a respectable rate. Still, the slowing economy coupled with presidential election anxiety made buyers more careful about value and cautious with spending.

"Stores I spoke to said their business is the same or actually better because they prepared themselves that business could be tighter," said Claudia Caicedo, Jón sportswear sales manager. "They are buying smarter and better, looking for the best value they can give their customer, and it has to be special."

Bookings equaled last January, she said, boosted by two new accounts in Mexico and Saudi Arabia.

"We had a really good show," said Pam

Martin, whose namesake showroom represents lines such as Weston Wear and Bordeaux. "I'm a little surprised, to be honest. In October, business was tight."

Diana Buckroyd, owner of the Aire showroom, said bookings of Ella Moss, Splendid and other labels were up from the previous two shows.

"We sold so much color, floral and tie-dye prints, ombré stripes and colorblocking," she said.

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— Claudia Caicedo, Jón

Rory Boyd, who has operated Sussie's contemporary boutique in Frisco, Tex., for 30 years, said her sales were higher for the last quarter and her plan was for "business as usual," though she was more deliberate in her choices. Boyd was disappointed with the dark palette in summer collections and she lamented the lack of new silhouettes.

"I would have bought more if I had seen more I liked," she said. "I like lady-like clothes."

Suitable looks included a scoop-back printed shift from Milly and a printed floor-length day dress with a fitted bodice by Twelfth Street by Cynthia Vincent.

Linda Kutler, buyer for Elements in Dallas, also decried the lack of newness, especially since she had a bigger budget to stock the shop Elements added last year for young casual clothing. Kutler spotted a few great looks, including Elizabeth Cole's thin pebble stingray

belt with a snake buckle, Harlow's tie-dyed sweats and bright, sexy dresses by McGinn and Geren Ford.

Gregory Reeves sold his own fashion jewelry line, Christopher Roca, and bought jewelry for his boutique in Manhattan, Christopher 19. The West Village shop specializes in jewelry that has an artisanal, funky aesthetic.

Reeves was drawn to the sense of humor in the emblems and charms of

Beth's Addiction's earrings and necklaces. He also felt that Catherine Page's abstract bird and silver chain necklace looked fresh and different, and picked up Calleen Cordero's brass and turquoise-studded leather wrist wraps.

Maytal Fashion, which produces Parameter, Sine and Laila, touted value by recutting Parameter's best-selling tops and dresses from last spring and slashing the prices. One bestseller: a black-and-white silk chiffon dress and slip wholesaling for \$42, which was 70 percent off the original price.

Creative director Maytal Sharifi plans to introduce sportswear in the fall Sine collection that emphasizes comfort and is based on what she and her twenty-something peers want to wear.

"We enjoy wearing dresses, but we want to feel like we're wearing sweats," she said.