

The MRket of Style Suffers No Crisis. Inside MRKET New York

Francesca Giuliani (January 24, 2012)



i-Italy explores the latest fashion trends at MRket's New York Fall/Winter Edition. At the most important menswear expo in the United States, Made in Italy is still a recipe for success

Even in times of economic crisis, style never goes out of fashion. In fact, notwithstanding the markets' turmoil, all the stylish men in New York and the top retailers of the Big Apple these days are attending [MRket](#) [2], the quarterly menswear fair organized in NYC and Las Vegas by [MR Magazine](#) [3] (an important publication for the sector's professionals) and catching up on the future must-haves for their classy customers.

The Italian presence at MRKET is consistent, with 32 exhibitors and 35 brands participating this season, grouped in a dedicated aisle of the show where "Made in Italy" reads all over the signs presenting the exhibitors' firms.

"One of the reasons we are so excited to have the Made in Italy group here at MRKET - says Britton



Jones, President and CEO of the Expo – is because it offers American retailers the opportunity to find truly unique products than they see in every other fair in the US. It's a real point of differentiation for us and something that the retailers really appreciate."

The Italian institutions are the ones to thank, this time. As Vice-Consul Dino Sorrentino tells i-Italy, in fact, "MRket is a very important stage for Made in Italy products, and it's important for us to provide tangible support to the participating firms, the vast majority of which are small and medium enterprises. It's crucial to keep working in synergy with the Italian Trade Commission, a synergy that helps reinforcing the "Sistema Italia" (the Italian System)."

The [Italian Trade Commission](#) [4] in fact played a very important part in encouraging Italian firms to attend the fair from its very first edition in Las Vegas, over three years ago.

Aniello Musella, Italian Trade Commissioner, breaks down the numbers of the Italian market quota in the US for i-Italy.

According to the Italian Trade Commission's studies of the [US Department of Commerce](#) [5]'s statistics, in 2011 Italy ranked 12th among the menswear and accessories suppliers of the United States.

The individual markets' analyses show that Italy's strongest quota is in the suits and ensembles market, for a total cash flow of 285,5 million dollars and registering a +19.25% sales increment from year 2010. Knitwear also represent a very important market, which grew +25,77% from 2010 and produced 155 million dollars in 2011.

The firms attending MRket produce "100% Made in Italy artisanal products, with a high market placement. There are no so-called 'grandi firme' (famous labels), but the products are extremely competitive as far as the price/quality ratio is concerned, something fundamental in this moment of slow recovery in the sector," Musella tells i-Italy.

"Made in Italy still represents an added value," says Luciano Moresco, whose brands produce button-down shirts and ties. "It also accounts for a higher product price," adds Lanfranco Messori, producing classic total looks. "We have been busy all day," say the representatives of Marchesi di Como silk tie manufacturers.

MRket is an unmissable event for the Italian menswear producers, as it is visited by both corporate buyers and specialty stores owners, ranging from [Bergdorf Goodman](#) [6] to [Mitchells Richards](#) [7], to [Saks Fifth Avenue](#) [8].

From Saks comes [Michael Macko](#) [9], former men's fashion director of the luxury department store and unchallenged guru, curating the third edition of *Vanguards Gallery* - a special exhibit at MRket where buyers are presented with "stuff that hasn't been on people's radars."

The hand-picked selections feature a variety of international brands, either new on the scene or veterans repositioning their brands or presenting new lines, which distinguish themselves by producing classic apparel with an edge. *Vanguards* offers a futuristic look of how menswear is evolving, in accordance with Macko's objective of surprising buyers that are too much in the know with something "they are not familiar with," he tells i-Italy.

In his red jacket and plaid shirt, Macko explains how the most interesting things happening in the menswear market are the return of color and of the preppy look: "Men are feeling a little more comfortable wearing colors like orange, red and corduroy. There's also a tendency to what we call the "urban preppy" look: preppy with a little more swagger. Guys are definitely getting dressed up again, which we really like, and they are always rediscovering something: cardigans, bowties, tartan and plaid, double breasted jackets, pocket squares and furnishings, accessories."



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