

FFANY: The Big Apple Loves Italian Shoes

Francesca Giuliani (February 02, 2012)



The most important trade show event for East Coast footwear and handbags retailers and professionals opened yesterday at the Hilton Hotel. i-Italy visited the Made In Italy aisle of the show with Consul General Natalia Quintavalle and Italian Trade Commissioner Aniello Musella.

It might sound strange, but New Yorkers love to buy shoes in the bedrooms of the Hilton Hotel. It's what happens at [FFANY](#) [2], the most important professional trade show event produced for footwear retailers and press by the Fashion Footwear Association of New York.

The first of the three annual expos organized by FFANY opened yesterday morning at the Hilton Hotel, where over 300 exhibitors unveiled their newest collections for the New York City buyers. FFANY is the most established show event produced on the East Coast, and the Italian presence at



the expo is always extremely significant.

This edition of FFANY, which will last until February 3, features a special spotlight on Italian shoes, with 23 exhibitors representing 31 brands of Made in Italy footwear and handbags grouped in a Made in Italy-dedicated section of the show. The initiative was made possible by a collaboration between [ANCI](#) [3] (Italy's National Footwear Manufacturers Association) and the [Italian Trade Commission](#) [4]'s New York bureau.

Over 3,500 visitors are expected to attend the show, which was visited yesterday by Consul General of Italy Natalia Quintavalle, accompanied by Vice-Consul Dino Sorrentino, Italian Trade Commissioner Aniello Musella and the President and Vice-President of ANCI, Cleto Sagripanti and Diego Rossetti, also exhibiting the latest collections of their companies: Manas and Fratelli Rossetti.

According to the Italian Trade Commission's studies of the US Department of Commerce's statistics, in 2011 Italy ranked 3rd among the footwear suppliers of the United States, for a total cash flow of \$1,021.38 million. The sector registered a +25% increment from 2010.

Aniello Musella believes that the strength of the Italian products still lies in their competitiveness as far as the price-quality relation is concerned. "The combination of traditional craftsmanship, creativity and innovation increase the appeal of Made in Italy products on American customers," he tells i-Italy. "2011 has definitely been a year of recovery for Italian footwear in the United States," he adds.

ANCI's Vicepresident Diego Rossetti from [Fratelli Rossetti](#) [5] tells i-Italy about the revived appreciation of Made in Italy footwear on the American market: "After such a harsh economic crisis, American customers want to be reassured about the quality of the products they purchase, and are willing to spend a little more to obtain the best. For Fratelli Rossetti, the US are the third most important market, after France and Germany."

After visiting the Italian exhibitors and gathering their opinions on the importance of initiatives such as the one encouraged by ANCI and the Italian Trade Commission, Quintavalle says: "All the Italian companies are extremely satisfied with how things are going here at FFANY. Many of them are coming back to the show after focusing on other markets: they know it's a very important moment to reinforce their presence in the United States, and New York is the main entrance to it. Italian manufacturers are also more aware of the importance working in synergy with each other and the institutions, which is beneficial for all of the parties and for 'Made in Italy' itself."

When we ask Quintavalle her opinion of the products presented by Italian exhibitors, she says: "I have seen some very original collections and a lot of creativity in each of the exhibits. It's been very entertaining."

The Italian exhibitors at FFANY come from a variety of productive districts in Italy, presenting a diverse offer. The classic footwear for men is represented by manufacturers from Le Marche such as Luciano Ilari, Romit and Dario Ciotti. Sandals come from Tuscany, where Nuovo Nicar produces them for brands such as Tom Ford and D&G, or from Campania, where Vitulli Moda Eddy Daniele gave them a sequined and glittered twist. Venetian manufacturers are also present, like Accademia and Mitica, the latter producing Maserati licensed sneakers.

Exhibitor Corvari, from Le Marche, is thrilled from the very beginning, as the first deal he got this morning was with retail colossus [Anthropologie](#) [6], one of the best selling clothing and accessories store-chains, with locations all over the US and in the most prestigious neighborhoods of New York City.

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