

Even more to talk about at Design Indaba

Despite the tough economic climate, Design Indaba Expo 2009 has reported that it has grown with more than 60 new exhibitors and has secured more than 20% extra floor space since 2008. With a month to go until the event, already more than 100 buyers have pre-registered, including 70 international buyers.



Buyers and consumers who attend the Design Indaba Expo can expect fresh, original, contemporary South African innovations, curated by an advisory panel of the best SA designers, stylists, critics and industry experts. The Expo has long been a proudly South African event, with visitors and buyers experiencing the cream of South Africa's design initiatives in areas as diverse as fashion, jewellery, architecture and graphic design.

Sponsored buyers spend millions

While many of the buyers will attend on their own steam, 13 are being sponsored by the DTI, a longstanding Design Indaba partner, which feels that Expo promotes international opportunities for South African entrepreneurs. Unlocking economic value is key, which is why increasing awareness of South African creativity is so important.

Christine Holenweg from Cape Sun Fair Trade Import in Switzerland was hosted by the DTI and said Expo was "a great opportunity to meet suppliers from different areas".

In 2005, the DTI-supported foreign buyers logged purchases in excess of R1 million, while in 2006 over R1,5 million was spent. This figure rose to above R3 million in 2007.

A total of 265 buyers attended Design Indaba Expo 2008, 100 of these from countries as diverse as Spain, Bangladesh, the United States, Sweden, Japan, the United Kingdom, Norway, France, Germany, The Netherlands, South Korea, Canada and more. During the course of 2008, an estimated R40 million worth of business was done between the 265 buyers and Design Indaba Expo exhibitors.

Strengthening relationships

Cristina Ilzarbe from Danye in Spain said she would attend Expo again "to strengthen relationships with suppliers and to look for new suppliers as well".

Daniel During from Thomas Klein Dubai felt Expo was worthwhile: "It exceeded my expectations. I expected to see new products and ideas, and establish contacts, but I actually left having placed many orders."

Allana Reid from Afrikana Gallery in Australia says Expo has a "fantastic selection of suppliers" and is "all-

over brilliant".

Local trend-setters

Local buyers numbered 141, representing 65 companies, including @home, Big Blue, Milieu and Woolworths.

Shannon Johnstone from Fat Tuesday in Pretoria had this to say: "Design Indaba Expo is perfect for sourcing good quality, innovative and South African-produced products. I would attend again to keep up w trends."

Opening international doors

Beyond commerce, Design Indaba Expo exhibitors have gone on to become household names in design. Eco-light designer Heath Nash, for example, went on to participate in 100% London and 100% Tokyo in previous years, having gained significant exposure and contacts at Expo. Tsai Design received a Red Dot award for its Nested Bunkbeds, which were first shown at Expo. In turn, Design Afrika's Xhosa gourd baskets are being distributed worldwide through the Conran Stores.

While regular exhibitors will be returning, more than 60 new kids on the block will be bringing fresh approaches and inspiration to the party.

For more information, visit: www.designindabaexpo.com

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>