

Brits In Paris



UKFT Paris Men's Fashion Week and Pre-Collections Report

July 2017

Paris Men's Fashion Week has been a long-standing event on UKFT's international tradeshow calendar. Over recent seasons, the tradeshow and the catwalks have been joined by designers showing women's pre-collections. This relatively new trend is important, as it changes the look and feel of Paris Men's Fashion Week, making it broader and more interesting for buyers and raises the question: how long will it be before the pre-collections element become as important as the men's designer collections? It also serves as a reminder that a number of major international fashion weeks also cover menswear and womenswear in the same week. Berlin and Shanghai have always done this. Who will be next?

Whilst there are no published figures to enable a meaningful comparison, there is a general consensus the Paris terrorist attacks in 2015 have made Japanese, American and Chinese buyers more reluctant about spending time in major buildings in Paris, preferring to spend more time in the smaller showrooms in the Marais or at Pitti Uomo in Florence. The international mood is also fairly downbeat, from concerns over the US economy under Donald Trump and Brexit in the UK, to a downturn in Japan, China and the rest of Asia. Buyers are being cautious and are reluctant to pick up new lines. In other parts of the world, such as the gulf, buyers are more upbeat and online buyers continue to use the shows to identify the brands of tomorrow. Whilst Paris has retained its reputation for being a preferred location for Designer menswear companies and pre-collections, the shows reflected a challenging market where buyers are increasingly risk-averse.

Across menswear and womenswear, we are seeing an increasing number of buyers turn their backs on some of the established larger Paris trade fairs, favouring the multi-brand showrooms, where there are no admission fees and where they can see a carefully edited selection of brands which meet their needs. This also means, however, that buyers have to spend more time running between the various showrooms and therefore have less time to visit the trade shows, where they would otherwise see new collections.

For some buyers this is not an issue, as they only want to see a limited number of existing brands. However, this makes the task of new market entrants all the more challenging as it isolates buyers from new collections which could provide them with an important point of difference. Enter the smaller hybrid shows like Man Paris and the new Tranoi, where buyers can see new collections in close proximity to the Marais showrooms, which are also attracting vast numbers of new and exciting brands. It's all about location.

The Tradeshow

There are three main trade shows which make up the Paris Men's Fashion Week from UKFT's perspective:

Tranoi & Tranoi Preview

Tranoi Homme (Man) and Preview is the largest of the three events. Located in the Bourse de Commerce at metro *Bourse* in central Paris and a new location at le Carreau du Temple in the heart of the Marais, Tranoi has seen the challenges facing trade shows and is fighting back. It has an interesting mix of high quality men's and women's pre-collections and Lux brands, set out in a high quality setting. The show has free entry for most buyers, providing they are properly accredited. There is a very efficient shuttle service between the two venues.

Tranoi boasts a number of UK regulars including Harris Wharf London, Ekaterina Kukhareva and Linda Farrow but it is also keen to welcome quality new entrants, welcoming CMMNTY, Consistence, Dafdae, Lamler and ODX for the first time. This season also saw the return of Vivienne Westwood Accessories and Bodybound. The organisers have a very good eye for new brands, instantly recognising the importance of newcomers CMMNTY, ODX and Dafdae. The reason for this is that in addition to being tradeshow organisers, Tranoi also owns the world-famous *L'Eclaireur* boutique. Exhibitors at Tranoi know that they will be well

looked after and that buyers will be given the kind of services and attention to detail usually only available in the multi-brand showrooms.

Traffic at Tranoi was good in parts. Certainly the quality of the buyers was extremely high and one of the UK exhibitors reported that this was the best show he had ever done with orders being placed at the show.

Exhibitor quotes

Ed Gotham of *Black Jamm*: "Tranoi Men's went well for us considering it was our first show. Although traffic wasn't high, the buyers were of the highest quality".

Fang Fang of *Consistence*: "The traffic on the first day was great but it got quieter after that. We met a number of buyers including Harvey Nichols Dubai. Whilst we did not write any orders, we did make a lot of new contacts. The larger buyers are less interested in meeting new brands and are usually busy with their schedules."

Josh Lanyon of *RH45*: "Tranoi was very good for us, the best we have had to date. However I can see a very difficult market. The problem at the moment is the smaller boutiques, the ones that usually give new brands a chance, they are at best breaking even. So a lot of buyers are buying the minimum and are in survival mode. Some are skipping Spring Summer as they have too much un-sold stock. I am very grateful for the grant I was given by DIT and the support from UKFT."

MAN Paris

MAN is one of the most sought after trade shows for new UK menswear brands, with an interesting and eclectic mix of western/indie and heritage brands. So far it has kept all its womenswear resources concentrated in its sister show WOMAN during Paris Women's Fashion Week in September but there are signs that it is under pressure to welcome pre-collections to the show.

In addition to a new showroom location in the Marais at rue Froissart, the main trade fair element was relocated to Place Vendôme in three different locations, two at Hôtel d'Evreux and one at Pavillon Vendôme. This new location for the shows in the 1st arrondissement was something of a gamble as it is a long way from the Marais but it generally worked as many of the better buyers prefer to stay in the centre of town in Paris's five star hotels. Whilst there was a little confusion about how many events there were on which floors, once inside the show it was well laid out and a map explained which exhibitors were showing where. In addition, like its women's shows, MAN has a very good VIP shuttle service between the venues in partnership with Tesla.

Brands in the showroom included: Ally Capellino, Les Basics and Traditional Weatherwear. In the main tradeshow were regulars: Fred Perry, Kestin Hare, Okun and Sunspel, as well as newcomers A,M, Story Mfg and Riz Boardshorts.

Traffic at the show was generally good. There was, as usual, a large number of specialist Japanese and US stores who are attracted by the product mix. The Showroom venue at Rue Froissart was generally busier than the show but this is deceptive, as the showroom space was smaller and tighter. Traffic at the tradeshow itself got off to a slower start but most UK

exhibitors said they had seen their key buyers by the end of the show. Some buyers struggled to get to grips with the disjointed nature of the show in three different locations but by and large the event was a success.

Exhibitor quotes

Matt Gill from A,M: “Man was generally very busy with a good range of quality buyers and brands. We suffered from being on a mezzanine which was an awkward space with limited traffic and no signage”.

Capsule Homme

Capsule was located at its usual location across the Seine in St Germain. Despite the excellent venue and layout, the isolated location and the lack of a shuttle service made this show feel much slower than the others. The exhibitors liked the brand mix and the look and feel of the show but the attendance was very disappointing and even more so on the upper floor. Whilst there was security screening on the door, the show organisers appeared not to be checking and registering buyers, leading some exhibitors to conclude that this might be the show’s last Paris edition.

Exhibitor quotes

Jason Roberts of *Gymphlex*: “We saw a mixture of French, US and Scandinavian shops, as well as Japanese retailers. We took several orders from new shops, details for many more who noted styles and met with some distributors and agencies who are interested in working with us.”

Chloe Cammidge of *Habits Studios*: “The location was a problem. I really think Capsule should move closer to Le Marais where most of fashion week is based”.

Showrooms

The main showrooms were present with most featuring men’s and women’s pre-collections as in the past, including: The Showroom Nextdoor by Toubia, Four Marketing, The Bridge, Alphabet, Rainbowwave, Polly King and Tomorrow Ltd. There were one or two additions including Resident Showroom for casual collections.

Overall the showroom traffic was excellent, confirming the trend towards the showrooms. However, some brands in the showrooms found that they mainly saw existing accounts rather than new ones.

Paul Alger, Director of International Business at UKFT said “Following the positive energy we saw at Pitti Uomo, it seems that Paris buyers are being much more selective. The showrooms are winning in the battle for the heart and minds (and budgets!) of buyers but the smaller shows are working hard to regain lost ground and some buyers have begun to realise that they also need new products from new brands to keep them fresh. This is where the shows have the upper hand.”

He continued: “Most UK companies have seen good buyers from the Gulf, Japan, Canada and the USA but UK buyers are being especially careful in the run up to Brexit. EU buyers are still keen to trade with the UK but UK brands are going to need to work hard to protect

their business, with some looking at radical new approaches to distribution, payments and currency.”

The many British brands exhibiting in Paris during fashion week make up the Brits In Paris group. For information on show grants and to become one of the Brits In Paris, [get in touch](#).

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