

## BUBBLE: Manageable Market

GARNERING JUST UNDER 1,000 visitors, Bubble New York hosted its eighth edition Aug. 2-4 in a new space, Cedar Lake, located in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood. The show's co-founder, Florence Rolando, was pleased that attitudes were upbeat, a change from recent shows where people were heavily focused on the economic downturn. Bubble featured 60 vendors—about 20 percent fewer than a year ago, but a move Rolando referred to as a "recession strategy." "Bubble is focused on staying a beautiful, inspiring and 'human'-sized show of highly selected brands with a consistent mix," she explained. "We think it is important to stick to our concept even in these hard times, and not to compromise on the quality of our collections, partners and displays."

One of the biggest differences between the August show versus previous editions was that 85 percent of the brands were American. Due to the euro's exchange rate and increasing freight costs, European brands have taken a backseat to U.S. companies. While the show featured many of its tried-and-true brands, a host of newly established companies appeared as well. Organic collections remained a highlight, comprising more than 50 percent of exhibitors. "Bubble is usually the place [to shop] if you're an organic store," Rolando noted. "This is where you'll find it."

Rolando said Bubble continues to stay true to its mission of serving as an inspirational show where buyers can scout new trends and talents. "We believe that post-crisis consumers will shop differently, with higher expectations about their shopping experience and the quality of what they buy," she noted. "They will look carefully for clever, well-thought product that respects them and respects the planet. We wanted Bubble to reflect this vision."

The next Bubble New York show is set for March 7-9, 2010; Bubble London will take place Jan. 31-Feb.1, 2010. Visit [www.bubbletradeshows.com](http://www.bubbletradeshows.com) for more information.



### CLASSIC REDEFINED

Hailing from Ralph Lauren, **Sara Noelle** founders set out to create a girls' line of their own that was print-driven and had a European flair. The collection for sizes 12 months to 10 years features classic silhouettes in sophisticated fabrics that have a modern look. Pieces from the Short Hills, N.J., line include a smocked bubble dress in a floral print, a berry-colored tunic with metallic stitching, a chocolate-colored swing dress with metallic circles, tiered skirts and foiled tanks in various pastels. Wholesale prices run from \$13.50 to \$74. Call (973) 232-6373.

## CHILDREN'S CLUB: Show & Tell

LAST MONTH'S EDITION of the ENK Children's Club show, held Aug. 2-4, hosted a healthy mix of newcomers and established brands showcasing spring wares, and show director Stanley Kaye noted the event provided an opportunity for exhibitors and buyers to find fresh avenues for retailing. "The world is slightly jagged for everybody," he said in regard to the economy's effects. "Now more than ever, a trade show brings people a way to do business more harmoniously."

In fact, exhibitors expressed a refreshingly positive attitude toward spring sales, noting buyers seem ready to invest once more. Kaye reported growth in the number of organic collections and smaller specialty lines spanning all categories from accessories to dresswear. Having been in the children's wear industry for more than 30 years, Kaye said he's witnessed many changes in the market, and one recent pattern among manufacturers is a concentration on truly differentiated product—especially from newcomers. "These vendors are focusing on a specific direction and look. Their lines are smaller because they're not trying to be something for everybody."

Kaye said overall, ENK is bullish about the kids' business. "I think the innovation in the market is still a strong point of the children's area," he reported.

The next Children's Club show is scheduled for Oct. 4-6 at the Javits Center in New York. For details, visit [www.enkshows.com](http://www.enkshows.com).



### PAR FOR THE COURSE

Anaheim, Calif.-based **Fore Axel & Hudson** injects boys' wear with a laidback vibe thanks to styles swiped from the golf course. Polos are adorned with preppy patterns like argyle and houndstooth as well as golf tees and golf carts. Other tops include short-sleeve wovens with flocking and appliqués, solid sweater vests and colorful tees, all of which match back to structured shorts in solids and plaids. Trilby hats, fedoras and driver caps complete the look. Sizes range from 3 months to 10 and wholesale prices are \$10 to \$19. Call (510) 610-2030.