

Première Vision Preview New York: Italy's Textiles Charm the Whole World

Francesca Giuliani (January 13, 2012)



i-Italy went to the Première Vision Preview at the Metropolitan Pavilion in New York's Chelsea neighborhood. The show offered a large selection of fabrics as well as high quality trimming collections and represented the ultimate guide to the season's main trends. We spoke with the General Manager, Jacques Brunel, the Italian Trade Commissioner, Aniello Musella, and a few Italian participants.

It's not easy to get a French man to spend a word of praise on the merits of any other country in the world, but when we asked Jacques Brunel -- General Manager of Première Vision, the most important textile and design expo in the world -- about the quality of the Italian textile production, he replied without a hint of Grandeur that: "Unfortunately it's obvious!"

Brunel is the mastermind of [Première Vision](#) [2], a biannual show held in January in New York and February in Paris, that presents an exclusive preview of tomorrow's fashion trends by bringing to the corporate buyers the still unfinished collections of the world's top-notch textiles suppliers.



Brunel started his Parisian show twenty-four years ago, but had the idea of bringing PremièreVision to the United States in the late 90s, when he realized that the American market deserved a special treatment.

“We noticed that American buyers were less inclined to travel, and that they were moving towards the Oriental markets to slash the manufacturing costs.” So Brunel thought about offering the American buyers the privilege to see all the best of the European collections in preview, before going to China or Hong Kong: “At that time, the attraction of China was so strong they were sure it was worthwhile to manufacture things there. Ask them today: now they’d much rather manufacture their goods in Europe, knowing that they can find great basics at the best prices. They are very happy to find that here.”

Another important source of legitimacy for Première Vision is the unique opportunity for networking and informal socialization it offers to the buyers who attend the show, Brunel explains. A market survey carried out eight months ago showed that the professionals who attend the show love it “because they get to talk to colleagues and have an opportunity to better learn how to buy and how to choose. Many of them are young and it’s beneficial for them to exchange ideas with more experienced buyers.”

Italy’s competitive advantage, according to Brunel, is given by the fact that “Italy” is an extremely powerful brand itself. “There is no other country in the world where firms don’t need a strong personal brand, but can rely on their nation’s name as such. Italy’s name is strong enough to sell, and it is so even more in Shanghai or Beijing than it is here in New York. In Asia, Italy stands between God and Earth.”

An example of this greater appreciation of Made in Italy in the Eastern World is represented by the luxury Chinese-Canadian brand [Ports 1961](#) [3], with over 250 retail stores all over China. “The vast majority of the fabrics they use comes from Italy”, Brunel explains.

In the January 2012 New York edition of Première Vision that just wrapped up yesterday at the Metropolitan Pavillion, Italy was represented by 21 firms from Piedmont, Lombardy and Tuscany.

Aniello Musella, the [Italian Trade Commissioner](#) [4], was very proud to show Italian vice-consul Dino Sorrentino and i-Italy around the stands of the Italian firms exhibiting their exclusive collections for Spring-Summer 2013, and stressed the importance of the Italian presence at Première Vision: “In the last ten years, this expo has become the most important event for all the operators of the textile and fashion sector. It is very important for Italy to be here.”

It is so important to “be here”, that the 21 participant firms decided to attend the show even when, due to the severe economic and political crisis Italy is undergoing, the Italian Trade Commission couldn’t support them financially at this time. The Italian Trade Commission’s studies of the US Department of Commerce’s statistics show that during 2011 Italy ranked 7th among the fabric suppliers of the United States, for a total cash flow of 270 million dollars and with positive trends on each individual fabric’s market.

The individual markets analyses show that Italian cotton in the US has grown +1.70% in 2011, and the revenues it generated amount to \$62.17 million. Cotton is Italy’s most imported textile product by Americans, but Italy is also the 1st supplying country for wool, whose market generated \$29.25 million in 2011 and grew +10.83%. Italian silk grew +4.03%, with revenues amounting to \$24.04



million. Italy is rapidly ascending the chart of the United States' performance and technical fabrics supplying countries, ranking 10th in 2011, when the sector grew +24.79%.

Musella believes that the competitive advantage of Italian textile products is still the rich offer of novelties, combined with high quality standards and with the strength of Made in Italy as a brand itself.

Musella also explains how the aggregate figure that puts Italy in the 7th place among the United States' fabric supplying countries is actually pretty inaccurate. In fact, many of the American orders of Italian fabrics are intermediated by Chinese manufacturers whom the American commission the final goods to, and considered as Chinese by the data gatherers. Exhibitor Corrado Pedroni of [Pizval Laces](#) [5] and Bobbinet, who supplies laces to brands such as Dolce&Gabbana and Polo Ralph Lauren, believes that the net figure could be ten times higher than the one officially estimated.

As Première Vision Preview New York closes, the Italian firms are getting ready for the Paris edition of the show, which will take place on February 16 and 17. Gigi Giachino of Miroglio, selling printed fabrics to American industrial giants such as Michael Kors, Ann Taylor and Ralph Lauren, gives i-Italy a sneak preview on what his firm is going to present for the occasion: in a special event in Place des Vosges, [Miroglio](#) [6] will present three exclusive collections created by three Italian contemporary artists, who had the chance to work with Miroglio's creative team and produce their own lines of designs. A rendezvous to look forward to.

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