

## Gift Fair Catania: the 14<sup>th</sup> edition successfully draws to a close

As we close the books on the fourteenth edition of the Gift Fair, held from 12 to 14 October at Etnafiere, the figures recorded confirm the vitality of the market in southern Italy, and particularly in Sicily. In fact, the records show that about 1,250 companies entered the fair during the two and a half days it was open, accounting for nearly 3,600 visitors, all of whom work in the sector. The response from Sicilian provinces and nearby Malta was excellent, while the Calabrian provinces remained stable and therefore ran against the prevailing trend of the overall figures.

This fair dedicated to gifts, party favours, arts and crafts, tableware, textiles and furniture accessories, once again proved that it is the main specialist exhibition in the South of Campania: “We’ve had an increase in attendance compared with previous years”, explained Giovanni Mirulla, the head of organisation for the Gift Fair, “By 2 pm on Sunday we’d already exceeded last year’s attendance. This means that workers in the sector have noticed the socio-economic structural changes and they’ve realised that you cannot, and must not, just stand there twiddling your thumbs, but rather you need to get down to business”.

Nevertheless, the organisers are keeping their feet firmly on the ground since they understand that the domestic market in the South, like the rest of the country, is facing major structural changes. However, they have once again proven to the one hundred or so exhibitors that they are reliable partners who really understand their reference market and international surrounding, capable of organising rewarding events in spite of the ongoing economic difficulties.

Year after year, Gift Fair has shown that it is a valid commercial platform, aware of both the local and international context. It’s no coincidence that during the exhibition a large-scale seminar was organised just like the one in collaboration with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, a semi-governmental authority that promotes Hong Kong’s foreign trade. Gianluca Mirante, the Director for Italy of HKTDC, gave a presentation to industry experts on all the opportunities provided for small and medium-sized enterprises to make inroads into the crowded Chinese market through Hong Kong. This opportunity should be seized, in particular, by SMEs in the fashion, jewellery and food and wine sectors.

The date for 2014 will be from 11 to 13 October.

The objective for the fifteenth edition could be to set sights on, after Malta, the entire Mediterranean basin both in terms of exhibitors and visitors.

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