

Excitement at the

WCAF Expo

"The WCAF Expo was outstanding—a strong showing for the industry that was well-attended by many of the most influential buyers and specifiers," said Josh Eichner, executive vice president of Framera, a vendor that unveiled over 140 completely new moulding profiles at their booth, which was a replica of a luxury frame shop. "It certainly feels like there's a bit of a revitalization in the framing business, evidenced by what was on display. For Framera, blended media options that coupled woods with metallic accents instantly outperformed forecasts. We also received extremely strong orders on our American

"Our partners come from all over the world, and they want to see what's new and different. Being at the WCAF Expo impacts our business in a great way."

Tony Gareri, CEO of Roma Moulding

Renaissance Collection—a more traditional line utilizing modern technology."

First-time and returning exhibitors impressed attendees by showcasing their innovative and interactive booth displays at the Expo, held at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino January 25-27. The influx of art and framing retailers indicated a high level of enthusiasm for the show, which set a new standard for industry professionals. The National Conference, which started a day earlier, on January 24, launched over 30 brand-new sessions and hands-on workshops as well as welcomed new expert instructors.

"The WCAF Expo is the only place where you're going to see moulding, glass, poster, and art vendors all in one place," said Kathy Thiel, president of ArtLine Ltd., a wholesale art and framing manufacturer in Waukesha, WI. "It's the best opportunity for framers to see what's out there. We are constantly looking for new images, new mouldings, and new glass, and to learn new techniques. Whatever is out there, we want to be able to offer it to our customers, and that's why we attend. If you're in the art and framing industry, you've got to come to this show."



The trailer of the Framera truck was made using their BW66-470 – Liquid Black finish in a 3" flat profile.



by Alexis Orlacchio

Creativity and Innovation

In addition to releasing never-before-seen collections, Larson-Juhl premiered a brand-new booth for the 2016 show. “Our four new lines really captivated our customers, and we sold a lot of product,”



Micah Paul Bolton from Micah Paul Creative in Pine Grove, CA, is announced as the 2016 Design Star Winner.

said Mark Reen, sales representative for Larson-Juhl. “I’m amazed at how many people dug out from the East Coast snow to get here.” While the winter storm caused delays and cancellations for much of the mid-Atlantic, the WCAF Expo still exceeded 4,000 attendees.

“I’ve been with the company for three years and this was the busiest show we’ve had so far,” said Doug Rozenboom, senior vice president of global merchandising and product development for Larson-Juhl. “We greatly exceeded all of our planned sales on the first day, so we were really excited.”

The 2015 Design Star winner, Francine Hackerott, helped unveil one of the newest collec-

tions, Salon 1789, the line that Larson-Juhl and Hackerott collaborated on to produce. She created a display piece for the booth that included the coronation of Empress Josephine in a tabernacle frame that used seven different mouldings.

The Tru Vue booth showcased an art sculpture made with samples of TruLife Anti-Reflective Acrylic, crafted by attendees. A moving display also showcased the difference between regular versus Optium acrylic, which is anti-static and abrasion-resistant. After integrating the latest technology into their glazing products, Tru Vue released upgraded versions of Museum Glass and Conservation Clear.

Another great example of exhibitor innovation was Peterboro Matboards. The theme, Carnival of Color, showcased a shooting gallery game complete with moving targets and was constructed using over 90 matboards. “We’re in a creative business and I thought it was time to show that through our booth,” said Alan Yaffe, president of Peterboro. “It was fabulous! So many attendees stopped in to see our booth and learn more about our company. It was the best show we’ve ever had at the WCAF Expo.”

For the first time at the WCAF Expo, Canon brought a host of high-end cameras and lenses to its newly expanded booth. Another added display featured a gallery decorated with images taken by famous photographers, printed using Canon printers, and framed in Prisma moulding. “The

Attendees take advantage of show specials and get the first look at exhibitors’ newest products.





New to this year's show is the Inspire Room, designed by Greg Perkins, which is filled with ideas for creative wall displays.



gallery wall gave attendees a closer look at our Explorers of Light program, and it was really great to have the collaborative effort with other WCAF vendors,” said Ed LaManna, marketing manager for Canon USA.

Other vendors with outstanding redesigned booths included Nielsen Bainbridge, Wild Apple, Crescent, and Valiani.

Throughout the Expo, exhibitors held exciting chances for attendees to win prizes. At Max Moulding’s 24th Anniversary Celebration, the company gave away the latest edition of the Apple Watch, won by KC Photography in Taft, CA, as well as an Apple iPad Air 4, won by Silver & Linda’s Framery in Midland, TX.

Get Inspired

The new Inspire Room, decorated by designer and instructor Greg Perkins, served as a designated space to spark creativity among framing retailers. “My goal was to be creative, but in a very practical way,” Perkins said. “I shared concepts that were quick, easy, and affordable so they will be profitable for framers, who walked away with ideas to implement in their shops. Making money should certainly be inspiring.” Vignettes featuring up-and-coming trends like steampunk and Mid-Century Modern incorporated wall decals and vibrant paint colors to show framing retailers how they can be more creative when working on projects and window displays.

“I felt it was important to show that creativity doesn't end with frame designs,” Perkins added. “By placing emphasis on the displays, I hope I imparted



that merchandising can make a big difference in the desirability of the framed art displayed in a retail setting.”

Steve McKenzie and Brian Wolf also offered creative effort for the Inspire Room, which hosted design-oriented seminars at The National Conference. Attendees could also visit the room between sessions.

In what may turn out to be a new tradition, the WCAF Expo hosted the first-ever Bloggers Tour. Five prominent interior design bloggers were invited to learn more about how to use art and framing in their profession. “I think the show totally exceeded our expectations,” said Krista Nye Schwartz of Cloth & Kind. “We all got really into it and learned a ton. I saw so many beautiful things, and it really was inspiring at a level that I didn’t anticipate.” Fellow bloggers included Tami Ramsay of Cloth & Kind, Vicki Gladle Bolick of The Ace of Space Blog, Holly Hollingsworth Phillips of The English Room, and Catherine Austin of Catherine M. Austin Interior Design.



Canon's newly expanded booth showcases the newest printer line and high-end cameras.



John Raney demonstrating how to make the perfect mat every time in his session "Mat Cutting: Back to Basics."



Susan Duhl shows attendees how to make practical, simply made structures to support a mat or frame.

PPFA Annual Convention

Now under the ownership of Monarch Expositions, the Professional Picture Framers Association held its Annual Convention for the fifth consecutive year at the West Coast Art & Frame Expo. The Convention serves to expand the knowledge of framers in the industry and gives them an opportunity to acquire new techniques and practices to enhance their businesses.

Among the special events hosted by the PPFA was the sold-out Welcome to Vegas Reception Meet and Greet, a prime opportunity for industry professionals to socialize and make networking contacts.



Steve and Jill (second from right) McKenzie host a group of interior design bloggers for a tour of the WCAF Expo.



David Lantrip discusses how to execute V-grooves, open V-grooves, and inlaid mats and always get professional results.



Steve McKenzie teams up with Greg Perkins to co-teach "Mid-Century Modern: Catch the Craze," which shows attendees how they can capitalize on the latest trends.

Among new PPFA instructors were Cliff Wilson, who shared his expertise on mounting paper-borne art in "Beyond Framing 101 – Paper," and Green Bay Packers photographer Mark Wallenfang, who led "Photographing Framed Images for Advertising and Social Media," intended to teach frame shop owners how to capture eye-catching images for a competitive edge.

The PPFA Keynote Luncheon, sponsored by Larson-Juhl, featured speaker Leslie Klingner, curator of interpretation at Biltmore, who presented



Photo walks, like this one at Valley of Fire State Park, are becoming increasingly popular events at The National Conference.

“Framed Through a Collector’s Eye: George Vanderbilt and Art at Biltmore” via Skype. Klingner discussed highlights of the Vanderbilt’s art collection at the Biltmore, located in Asheville, NC, and the care artists, dealers, and collectors took to ensure works were framed to exacting standards. She also shared a behind-the-scenes look at the conservation involved and the integral part art and framing plays in Biltmore’s magnificent historic interiors.

At a social highlight of the Convention, the President’s Dinner, guests celebrated outgoing President Robin Gentry’s tenure with fun, entertainment, and door prizes. Gregory K. Norris was welcomed as the new PPFA President, and the 2016 board members were introduced. After much anticipation, the winners of the Print and Open competitions were announced. Boris Smorodinsky, owner of Striving Artists Framing and Art Services in Chatsworth, CA, received first place in the Print competition. John Ranes II, CPE, GCF; Candy Wiater; and Michelle Kittredge from The Frame Workshop of Appleton, in Appleton, WI, took the top spot in the Open category.

The Professional Picture Framers

Association has been serving art and framing retailers for over 40 years. By offering services, events, education, and more, the PPFA continues to lead its members to discover, understand, and act on new business opportunities.

Business-Boosting Benefits

“There is such an emphasis on education at the WCAF Expo; I think that’s part of the reason why the show is so successful,” said Jeff King, who led a presentation on business training for SpecialtySoft POS software in which he demonstrated a comprehensive feature set and reporting system for marketing, customer retention, and shop management. “If you’re not at the show, you’re not serious about this industry.”

World-renowned photography instructor Hal Schmitt led two sold-out workshops. “Nighttime Photography” focused on capturing stunning low-light images of the architecture, fountains, and lighting displays of the Las Vegas Strip. “Landscape Photography: Valley of Fire” let attendees practice proper exposure techniques, white balance, framing, and more while shooting at the incredible state



park outside Las Vegas. After the session, attendees were each able to have an image from the shoot printed at the Canon booth on a PIXMA PRO-1.

"I take all the classes I can," said Julie Redmond of Artisan Framing Studio in Richfield, MN. "If you're running your own shop, you have to learn everything on your own. It's nice to come to the WCAF Expo, where the classes are scheduled and organized and the experts teach you."

Meg Glasgow and Ken Baur teamed up to lead "Retail Makeover Workshop," a more in-depth version of their 2015 session. The duo provided the makeover advice given to Tru Vue Complete Store Makeover contest winner, Fourth Corner Frames in Bellingham, WA. "Ken and Meg were fabulous; I left with so many tips that I can apply to my business immediately," said session attendee Wendy Carmichael of Island Exposures Gallery in Parkville, BC.

Mark Reen added, "The great thing about the WCAF Expo is that framers can take an abundance of classes. Even framers who have been in business 20 to 30 years are always looking to change with the trends and learn new things. The classes here always fill up quickly."

What's next for the future of frame shops was the topic of the PFM Successful Retailing breakfast panel, which continued to be one of the highest-attended sessions at The National Conference. The panel, moderated by Jay Goltz, offered insights and candid opinions on upcoming trends, marketing concepts, and business practices to framing retailers. The panel consisted of Gary Barker, national sales manager of DTG; Doug Rozenboom, senior vice president of global merchandising and product



There is lots of fun to be had at PPFA's Welcome to Las Vegas Meet and Greet, where Chapters compete for the best table top display.

development at Larson-Juhl; Sarah Ruggieri, co-owner of SunDance Graphics; and father-and-son retailers Jay and Sean Kogan from Hall of Frames in Phoenix, AZ.

Goltz said, "I thought the most important point came from an audience question of whether bigger is better. Business owners really need to take stock of what is important, what limitations they have in both their market and their management skills, and what they want out of business. There is no one-size-fits-all in business, and there is no right or wrong answer."

"Every year we work hard to bring new, relevant, and exciting aspects to the show, and then the challenge becomes 'how do we make it better?'" said Trade Show Director Deborah Salmon. "I am excited about all of the positive feedback from attendees and exhibitors, and this year we have exceeded expectations. We will be returning to the Paris for the 2017 Expo and I know the staff has their work cut out for them to top 2016." The next West Coast Art & Frame Expo will be held at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino January 23-25, 2017 with The National Conference beginning a day earlier, on January 22. **PFM**

