

THINKING POSITIVE

The Stock Market launched The Rivers Collection, a private label line of stone lavatories, kitchen sinks, bathtubs, wrought iron sink stands and iron/stone vanity sets.

Vendors at the 2008 Kitchen/Bath Industry Show in Chicago were upbeat, conducting business as usual and planning for growth.

>> By Pat Lenius

Housing slump? Think remodeling, water efficiency, universal design, home spa, pro kitchen, energy savings! Those were the buzzwords at the Kitchen/Bath Industry Show, which filled three halls at Chicago's McCormick Place for the first time.

The four-day conference and expo held in April drew its largest-ever turnout, according to NKBA. Optimism prevailed among the approximately 1,000 exhibitors. For example, Jacuzzi said it has chosen this down market to invest more money into the company. "We have quadrupled our staff and Jacuzzi divisions are collaborating," said Andy Stokely, marketing manager/bath products. Added Tom Koois, Jacuzzi president/CEO, "We want to be Ferrari [referring to the Italian sports car] — we want our brand to be aspirational."

Among the highlights:

- **The Spa Effect.** Kohler Co. introduced the Fountainhead VibrAcoustic bath, which uses a technology-based sound therapy that sends vibrations through the body to promote relaxation. The multi-sensory environment

synchronizes music, vibration and light with water. Lasco Bathware unveiled SonicSplash "immersive music" to select models of baths and showers that transforms the bath or shower shell into a speaker. The spa effect is further enhanced with lights and scents. Jacuzzi launched the Omega luxury shower with a cascading showerhead, rainfall ceiling tile, handheld shower, four body sprays, contoured teak seat, tempered glass roof, steam generator, aromatherapy outlet and recessed interior lighting. A number of other suppliers offered chromatherapy and aromatherapy options. For example, Mr. Steam offers a spa package that includes an Aromasteam system, a Chromasteam system and in-shower music therapy speakers to complement the steam generator.

- **The Green Movement.** Moen, Danze, GROHE, American Standard, Price Pfister, Kohler, Gerber, TOTO, Alsons, Delta Faucet, Hansgrohe, KWC and Hansa were among those that mentioned WaterSense certification. Fluidmaster announced its planned launch of the PRO 45AR and the PRO 45HR fill valves this summer. Engineered with special inserts, the valves adjust the water refill rates specific to toilet models, including high-efficiency water-saving versions.

- **Universal Design.** Exhibitors showed low- or no-threshold shower stalls, hands-free faucets, comfort-height toilets and assorted styles of grab bars. For example, at the Moen booth, decorative but functional grab bars featured soft grips for greater comfort.
- **Pro Kitchen.** Dornbracht was one of many vendors that showed pot filler kitchen faucets in various styles and finishes. BLANCO and Elkay were among those that displayed both stainless steel and solid surface kitchen sinks in different configurations with assorted accessory options.
- **Storage Solutions.** A number of exhibitors, including Decolav and Villeroy & Boch, displayed bathroom fixtures and furniture that provided ingeniously designed storage without negatively impacting the beauty of the pieces.
- **Showroom Merchandising.** Symmons has created an interactive wall-mounted display for showrooms that helps customers visualize how the products will look in their homes. American Standard offered a modular wall display of its various lines that showrooms can customize as needed.
- **Tankless Water Heaters.** Rheem, Rinnai and Noritz were among the vendors showing tankless water heaters. Sales have been growing at a rate of 30% per year, driven by homeowners, according to one of the suppliers. About 325,000 tankless water heaters were sold in the United States last year, the vendor said.

K/BIS 2009 will be held at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta May 1-3. For more coverage of the show, watch the news and product pages of *Supply House Times*, read the Bath & Kitchen Pro E-Newsletter and visit our Web site for frequent updates: www.supplyht.com.



▲ TOTO's booth included a wall of working showerheads.



◀ At the DuPont booth, a custom-made Corian sink is paired with a Corian Illumination series countertop in Glacier Ice.



▶ Price Pfister's design team was at work in its booth during the show.



▲ Danze displayed its new Orrington powder room collection with special styling at the base of the fixtures.



▶ Don Gamble, executive vice president/sales and marketing at Basco, showed the new curved Celesta shower door.

AS SEEN AT K/BIS



Lasco Bathware presented Seamon Sales Associates, New Albany, IN, its 2007 Representative of the Year award at K/BIS. Pictured, L to R: Gene Hobbs and Dave Seamon of Seamon Sales; Lasco's Jim Bollinger, Midwest regional sales manager, and Fred Adams, vice president of sales and marketing; and Tom Smith of Seamon Sales. Seamon's staff includes salesmen Barry Horral, Gene Hobbs, Tom Smith and second-generation owner David Seamon, as well as inside sales staff Susan Koranchan and Cheryl Banet.



Elkay honored Dellon Sales, Albertson, NY, as its "Rep of the Year" at its annual Chairman's Dinner during K/BIS. Pictured, L to R: Timothy Jahnke, Elkay's president/CEO; Mark Whittington, Elkay's senior vice president of sales; Ken Schwab, Scott Dellon and David Dellon, principals of Dellon Sales; and Ronald C. Katz, executive chairman of Elkay's board of directors.



The Storehouse of World Vision presented its Crystal Vision Awards during a breakfast meeting at K/BIS. John Wicks, vice president of merchandising of plumbing and bath for The Home Depot, accepted the 2008 Crystal Vision award from Barbara C. Higgins, executive director of the Plumbing Manufacturers Institute. Ed Jimenez, national sales manager at Your Other Warehouse, was presented with the "Distributor of the Year" award. The companies were honored for their donations to the Storehouse, which makes these products available to local churches and organizations for distribution to those in need.



Symmons Industries hosted a hospitality event at its booth on the K/BIS show floor. On hand to greet visitors were Bill O'Keefe (right), president/CEO, and his son, Tim O'Keefe, executive vice president.

The company unveiled a new look, new messaging and an updated, enhanced product portfolio at the show. Its new logo includes the tagline: "The Smart Choice."



At the Delta booth, Paul Patton (left), senior product development manager, and Keith Allman (right), president of Delta Faucet Co., greeted Bob Miodonski, publisher, *PM Engineer* and *Bath & Kitchen Pro*, and associate publisher, *Plumbing & Mechanical* and *Supply House Times*. Among the highlighted features at the booth was a display describing Delta's new Diamond Seal technology.



Don Devine (center in photo), president/CEO of American Standard Brands, met with Bob Miodonski (left), publisher, *PM Engineer* and *Bath & Kitchen Pro*, and associate publisher, *Plumbing & Mechanical* and *Supply House Times*, and George Zebrowski (right), publisher, *Plumbing & Mechanical*, and group publisher, *PM Engineer* and *Supply House Times*.