

EXHIBITION NEWS



Caspari



Bishop Cards



Nepenthe



Avanti



Adele Sefton Bolton College



Quality and Style

Charlotte Cowell looks at what American publishers have to offer in a review of the National Stationery Show, which took place on 20–23 May at the Jacob J Javits Center in New York.

I went to the National Stationery Show and Surtex for the first time last year and this time around they proved to be even more of an inspiration, from the quality of work on display to the happy atmosphere and excellence of the exhibition venue. The organiser, George Little Management, injects some real sophistication and flair into these shows, where the most stylish side of America's card publishing industry has the chance to really shine. The presence of 300 first-time exhibitors also guaranteed that there was something new to see for everyone.

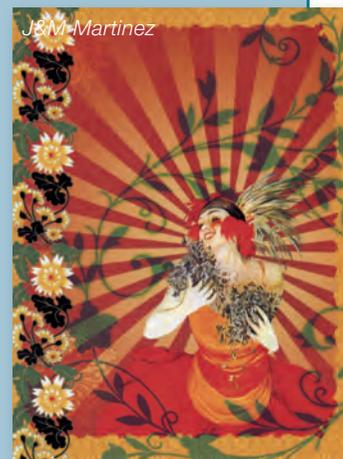
In terms of trends, there was a tremendous Asian influence to the entire proceedings, with Japanese art and paper-magic proving a dominant theme (see J P Trading for a taste of the best). Reams of uniquely American imprimables were everywhere, gorgeous letter-press stationery was present in abundance and flocking rather than glitter was the finish of choice. (Sparkles, in fact, are kept more at a minimum in the States, in rather sharp contrast to the UK where many people routinely get lost in glitter factories).

Kathy Krasner, Editor of US publication, Greetings etc, also identified the growing popularity of 'sister cards', targeted for sending between Afro-Caribbean women, whilst greetings designed around pet pooches are also growing in popularity. (Kathy also drew to my attention a craze plush toy called Webkinz, by Ganz, which include a unique code linking the product to an online virtual pet. www.webkinz.com)

It was interesting, as ever, to see on their home turf the American companies which have successfully crossed over to the British market. Of these, the art-lovers favourites, Caspari and Pomegranate, reported that the exhibition had gone particularly well for them, while Rick Ruffner of Avanti emphasized the importance – for both individual publishers and the industry in general – of having a presence at trade shows either side of the Atlantic.

Avanti's stand, which habitually occupies a prime position at one of the entrances, was a magnet for just-arrived visitors (who it thoughtfully stocks up with water!) and was my own first stop off. While the publisher is renowned for its unmistakable kitsch-humour photographs of domestic pets, I was even more excited to see the launch of an entirely new collection of elegant greetings, where the focus is nothing less than real love, from Valentine's through weddings to the birth of babies.

The creative scope and superb finishing on these cards – from fashionable flocking to intricate die-cutting – was set to impress, and I was intrigued to hear how the cards are shipped around America to undergo such specialist treatments. Avanti has recently broken into the UK market since launching to the trade at Spring Fair, so it will be interesting to see if it can now give the Brits a taste for the



J&M Martinez



Kamidashi Doll