

# CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR 68 YEARS

\$3.50 VOLUME 68, NUMBER 23 JUNE 1-7, 2012

## NEWS

### New L.A. Trade Show Lazr to Focus on Footwear, Apparel, Accessories

This August a team of footwear and trade show veterans will debut a new trade show at **L.A. Live** in downtown Los Angeles.

The Aug. 13–15 **Lazr** show will be held in a tent in the same location where “American Idol” is filmed within the 27-acre entertainment complex, developed by **Anschutz Entertainment Group** (AEG). Tucked between the **J.W. Marriott** hotel and the **Los Angeles Convention Center**, the 42,000-square-foot rooftop space is air-conditioned, sits atop an ample parking lot with its own entrance, and has an outdoor area where organizers envision sponsored parties and other evening events during the show.

Organized by **Zoom Inc.**, Lazr is led by a team that includes show founder John Ruffo, a longtime footwear distributor and retailer who helped launch **MAGIC’s FN Platform** footwear show before a stint as executive vice president for the footwear group at **ENK International**. He’s joined by **Nike** and **Reebok** veteran Mark Anderson and Andre Warren, co-creator of the **Workroom** show in Las Vegas.

The show’s primary focus is on footwear, but Ruffo expects apparel and accessories exhibitors to make up a portion of the mix. Ruffo anticipates 75 to 100 exhibitors for the launch.

Ruffo promises a broad mix of brands for the launch. “It’s **Jeffrey Campbell**, **Marc Fisher**, **Irregular Choice**, **Bronx**, **Diba**, **Titan Industries** [and **Clarks**]. We need to cater to the whole industry, and L.A. is a great melting pot.”

Dallas-based **Freeman** is designing the trade show booths, which will feature translucent walls to keep the show floor light and airy. Booths at the show’s center will be open format. For bigger brands that want a more private space, there will be enclosed booths along the perimeter of the show.

#### Concierge experience

Organizers have dubbed Lazr a “concierge trade show” with amenities for attendees and exhibitors, such as matchmaking opportunities for buyers and brands, opportunities to connect with the end consumer, and an **iPad** giveaway contest for buyers who write orders at the show.

Charter exhibitors will receive a discounted rate, which will be locked in as long as they show continuously at Lazr, Ruffo added. These charter, or



**SHOW BUSINESS:** Lazr founder John Ruffo has a long career in the shoe industry. He is pictured in front of the tent at L.A. Live, where the Lazr show will be held in August.

founding, exhibitors will be given first opportunities for sponsorship placement, as well.

Ruffo said he wants to incorporate the best practices learned from the trade shows held around the world. “I want to create a show we can call our own again as an industry. We want to be that fresh new face in the industry.”

Ruffo is enthusiastic about the opportunities built into the location. “I’ve got it all here,” he said. **Wolfgang Puck**, which runs the **Wolfgang Puck Bar & Grill** and **WP24 Restaurant & Lounge** restaurant at L.A. Live, will provide concessions for the show, Ruffo added.

There are two hotels within the L.A. Live complex, the **J.W. Marriott** and the **Ritz-Carlton**, and two across the street to the north and east, the **Luxe City Center** and the **Hotel Figueroa**.

“All the hotels are in walking distance. You never have to leave; it’s all here,” said Ruffo,

who rattled off sponsorship and branding ideas during a recent tour of the site. A footwear company could rent the Ritz-Carlton spa to offer manicures and pedicures to buyers. The wall of windows facing the entrance of the **J.W. Marriott** could be used to promote a brand. Show organizers want to incorporate on-site blogging, gifting suites for celebrities and pop-up shops to entice consumers, as well.

“Everyone is going to have a good time—and they’re going to write orders,” Anderson said.

#### Timed with market

Lazr will run concurrently with **Los Angeles Fashion Market** and the **California Market Center’s** own footwear show, **Transit**. Lazr plans to run shuttles to ferry buyers the 12 blocks between the **Los Angeles Fashion District** and L.A. Live.

Lazr is scheduled the week before the **MAGIC** show and **FN Platform** open in Las Vegas, and organizers are hoping the timing will benefit buyers who want to get a jump on business before the Las Vegas shows.

“This is the place where you write your paper before you go to Vegas,” Ruffo said.

For more information about Lazr, visit <http://lazrtradeshow.com>.

—Alison A. Nieder