

Fine Italian Merchandising

The 53rd International Garden Centre Congress found itself in Northern Italy last September, giving its attendees a fresh look at Italy's garden center scene.

By Renae Bobbett

Well-made espressos, bold colors, front-line fashion cues and streamlined shopping experiences are just a few standouts you might expect from a trip to Italy. Now what if we told you each of these expectations were met while visiting some of Italy's best garden centers?

Last September, while attending the 53rd International Garden Centre Congress in Südtirol

(Northern Italy), Todd and Renae Bobbett, owners of Beaver Bark Gift & Garden Center (Richland, WA) and past Merchandiser of the Year winner, were busy with their camera, capturing inspirational ideas to show their staff back home.

In the following, Renae kindly shares some of her favorite photos from the trip with *Lawn & Garden Retailer*.

High Impact, Little Clutter

Simple, contemporary lines and a little creativity can go a long way in a display. Using larger items and fewer elements can create a high impact display.



Schullian Garden Center



Veridea Garden Center



No Mess, No Barista

Espresso vending machines were prevalent in each garden center. We have a small coffee bar at Beaver Bark, which is used more by employees than customers it seems. Todd, my husband, is in the process of bringing in one of these machines for our garden center.

All at the push of a button, the coffee was amazingly tasty and fresh, with no barista to pay, nor mess to clean up — plus it had the capacity to make as many as 900 cups before the need to restock.





Veridea Garden Center



Wielander Garden Center

Grab & Gone

Colorful “grab’n’go” containers were very popular on this trip. We saw a great assortment of pieces that were easy to pick up and take home. These items were all finished, healthy, seasonal and ready to make someone happy.



Veridea Garden Center



Veridea Garden Center



Plant jewelry bins at Wielander Garden Center.



Wielander Garden Center



Well Red

The color red was used consistently at Schullian Garden Center to make statements — all of which invited customers into different parts of the property (e.g., parking lot, entrance, growing greenhouse).

The owner of Schullian was an art major and she recognizes the power and effect color can have on people. Her growing greenhouse with the welcoming dog, red hand chairs and striking pillars beckons you to walk

the entire space.

Red watering cans lined the fence to catch the attention of passersby — all meticulously pointing in the same direction, leading drivers to the parking lot, all while giving them an idea of what they can expect inside the garden center.

For the entrance (above), using large display items were a simple (and bold) statement that lead us right to the entrance of the outdoor shopping area. **LGR**

Plants With Bling

Another popular feature at many of the garden centers we visited in this region was simple and contemporary plant jewelry. Using easy-to-keep plants, display tables were clean lined and not crowded with too much product, which accentuated the art created by combining a colorful pot, plant jewelry and a succulent.



Wielander Garden Center



Wielander Garden Center

