

MERCHANDISE THIS!

Last month, Tim and I headed to Las Vegas to represent *Lawn & Garden Retailer* as the official publication sponsor of the National Hardware Show's Lawn, Garden & Outdoor Living segment. It was a quick trip, but we still managed to squeeze in a little time on the Strip and two full days on the show floor — including two presentations!

First, I had the opportunity to build a panel of professionals from a wide range of companies in our industry and lead a discussion on product design trends. Jerrett Dornbusch from Southern Patio, Helena Rozo Drori from Rosso's International, Ron Greening from Dramm (who wrote a great article for us last year on merchandising by color; check out the March 2008 issue) and Chuck Coletta from SGS rounded out the table. The panelists showed photos of their products, and discussion topics ranged from how designers evaluate current fashion, color and industry trends to what ideas most impact design of lawn and garden products.



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But the main event for me came the next day: a case study-style presentation on merchandising with Renae Bobbett, co-owner of Beaver Bark Gift & Garden Center, our Merchandiser of the Year. We put together a killer PowerPoint with old and new photos from the Richland, Wash., store and told the presentation attendees about the components of a great display and how to keep shoppers interested throughout the store. Beaver Bark's "little house" was a hit during the presentation, too — a little creativity really goes a long way!

I returned from Vegas hoping to find my inbox flooded with entries for our next Merchandiser of the Year competition. Have you submitted your entry? You know the drill: Put together up to five photos that exemplify your merchandising strategy and send them our way! It must be your garden center's original work — meaning no prefab or suppliers' materials — and needs to have appeared in your store any time during 2008, from the height of the spring season to your big Christmas open house. Live goods, hard goods, gift items — it's up to you! Send your best and brightest displays. We'll be unveiling the three finalists in an upcoming issue and open up the voting just before the holidays.

Haven't gotten it together yet? Well, you still have time: Entries are due July 1 through our website, www.lgrmag.com, or by mail to my attention. There are more details on page 14. Can't wait to receive your entry!

P.S. Are you going on any of the garden center tours this summer? They're coming up — shoot me an e-mail before you leave or find me on the bus! Sometimes I sign autographs...



The "little house," a focal point at Beaver Bark Gift & Garden Center in Richland, Wash., helped clinch the retailer's victory in last year's Merchandiser of the Year competition.

You have a month to submit your 2009 Merchandiser of the Year nomination — for yourself or another deserving garden center. Turn to page 14 for more information on how to enter!



LAWN & GARDEN Retailer

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