

# Trade Shows of the Gift Market



A condensed but comprehensive guide to give you the information you need to enhance your gift section.

By Mackenzie Gaffney

To provide the most beneficial information to help develop or keep your gift section fresh and specialty oriented, we asked the sponsors/managers of the gift shows here in the states to provide the five Ws (who, what, where, when and why) of their shows. Below you will find their responses, which will help you decide which show is the best for you to attend. In order to keep the article timely for months to come, the corresponding Web sites will provide you with the specific upcoming dates and registration information needed to attend. The information below comes strictly from each gift show itself, though *Lawn & Garden Retailer* finds each show valuable, we did not provide the facts. But I will say that each one offers something distinctive, whether it is a different category or artisans and specialty shops from the respective region. And, it could provide that special artist you can feature or gourmet food product that you can carry that will make your garden center more memorable. There are six shows listed; but please remember this is not a complete listing of the shows dedicated to the gift market. These are some just to get you started.

## AMERICASMART ATLANTA

Atlanta, Ga.

[www.americasmart.com](http://www.americasmart.com)

**Mission/Background:** It is the nation's leading gift, home furnishings and area rug marketplace and the largest trade mart/trade show complex of its kind in the world. More retailers from more places do business here than in any other U.S. wholesale market.

**When:** Twenty-three wholesale markets are hosted annually, six are dedicated to the gift and home furnishings markets. With the exception of AmericasMart's Florida Gift & Home Furnishings Market, all of the shows are held in Atlanta at the AmericasMart Atlanta campus.

**Registration:** AmericasMart is open to the trade only, and there is no fee to attend.

**Sponsors:** All of the markets are sponsored by AMC, Inc., the parent company of AmericasMart Atlanta.

**Attendance:** More than 548,000 people attend annually.

**Target markets:** All retailers, from small specialty stores to large department stores.

**Geographical region of attendees:** Global reach — 50 states and 80 countries.

**Dedicated floor space:** 4.2 million sq.ft.

**Show vendors:** Diverse group of exhibitors spanning the gift, home furnishings and area rug landscape. AmericasMart ensures retailers immediate access to the nation's largest single collection of product in the gardens, tabletop, fine linens and home décor, gourmet, holiday/floral, area rugs, general gift, apparel, gift and resort, fashion accessories and fine jewelry, furniture and furnishings, etc.

**Buying or perusing:** Buying, retailers identify this show as the wholesale marketplace most important to their business.

**Educational sessions:** The Discovery Series offers Market attendees an extensive menu of practical, yet consistently modern and insightful, seminars. Topics range from business fundamentals and the bottom-line to consumer behavior and trends, interior design and design ideologies. Speakers are renowned industry professionals/experts.

## LAS VEGAS GIFT EXPO

Las Vegas, Nev.

[www.merchandisegroup.com](http://www.merchandisegroup.com)

**Mission/Background:** To provide customers with an unparalleled selection of mid-market gift and variety merchandise. ASD/AMD's ♦

Photos courtesy of AmericasMart Atlanta.

Las Vegas Gift Expo's unique association with the nation's largest variety and general merchandise show makes it truly a one-stop shopping event.

**When:** Held twice yearly, in March and August.

**Registration:** It is free for the trade. This show is not open to the public.

**Sponsors:** ASD/AMD's Las Vegas Gift Expo is produced by VNU Expositions' ASD/AMD Merchandise Group and runs in conjunction with the ASD/AMD

Trade Show-Las Vegas and the ASD/AMD Jewelry Show at the Mirage, also in Las Vegas.

**Attendance:** In excess of 55,000.

**Target markets:** Independent gift retailers, national chains and buying consortiums.

**Geographical region of attendees:** National.

**Dedicated floor space:** 12,000 net sq.ft. is dedicated specifically to gift product channels.

**Show vendors:** 500 companies exhibit in 1,200 booths, selling products in all gift and variety categories.

**Buying or perusing:** It is primarily a buying show — no cash and carry — order writing only.

**Educational sessions:** No.

**BOSTON GIFT SHOW**

Boston, Mass.

[www.bostongiftshow.com](http://www.bostongiftshow.com)

**Mission/Background:** The Boston Gift Show is the largest, most comprehensive gift market in New England. Its mission is to provide retailers with the latest and greatest that the gift industry has to offer, and present resources that cannot be found in some of the major markets.

**When:** It is held semi-annually each spring and fall.

**Registration:** Open to the trade only and does not require a fee.

**Sponsors:** The Gift Show is managed by George Little Management, LLC.

**Attendance:** 9,000 retailers per show.

**Target markets:** Markets represented, and profiles of attendees are similar to those of the California Gift Show and the New York International Gift Fair.

**Geographical region of attendees:** The show consists of attendees from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut, North Eastern New York and South Eastern Canada.

**Dedicated floor space:** 132,000 sq.ft. is dedicated to the spring show, and the fall show covers 102,000 sq.ft.

**Show vendors:** 600 exhibitors are present in categories that include:

- General Gift — established and new gift resources, such as decorative accessories, stationery, gourmet and specialty foods and products, collectibles, novelties, holiday items, etc.

- Souvenir Source — 65 exhibitors that feature resort apparel, souvenirs, novelties, impulse items, games, collectibles and toys. Exclusive to the spring show.

- Made in New England — distinctive giftware and specialty foods unique to the region.

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- Handmade — work of domestic and international artisans in a variety of media, such as ceramics, wood, metal, glass, basketry, fiber, paper, jewelry and leather products.

- The Museum Source — manufacturers, publishers and distributors of products found in museum gift shops and galleries.

- At Home — fine decorative and home accessories like hand-painted and contemporary furniture, lighting, vases, candlesticks, floor coverings, etc.

- Personal Accessories — personal care items, perfume, travelware, belts, fashion accessories, health and beauty.

- Jubilee Gift Basket Pavilion — in fall, exhibitors feature gift basket items, such as gourmet foods, bath and body products, candles, aromatherapy, corporate gifts, sports and hobby gifts, coffee and tea, cookies, chocolates, florals, themed baskets, etc.

**Buying or perusing:** Buying.

**Educational sessions:** Educational programs are offered in topics such as merchandising, display techniques, customer service and promotions.

## CALIFORNIA GIFT SHOW

Los Angeles, Calif.

[www.californiagiftshow.com](http://www.californiagiftshow.com)

**Mission/Background:** This show is the largest gift show on the West Coast. It is the premier

source for the latest lifestyle trends, such as home décor, personal care, jewelry, handbags, belts, pillow and rugs.

**When:** The Gift Show is held semi-annually during the winter and summer.

**Registration:** The show is open to the trade only with no registration fee.

**Sponsors:** This show is managed by George Little Management, LLC on behalf of DMG World Media.

**Attendance:** 31,000.

**Target markets:** Markets that are represented include fashion accessories, jewelry, home furnishings, seasonal and floral products, garden/outdoor décor, personal care, stationery, resort and souvenir. The show reports a large portion of attendee profiles comes from specialty stores, museums and galleries, florist/floral accessories stores, mail order catalogs, craft retailers and gift shops.

**Geographical region of attendees:** Predominantly draw from a 400-mile radius of Los Angeles; largest attendee groups are from Southern California and north to Monterey, Calif., Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah.

**Dedicated floor space:** During the winter show, net exhibit space is 305,000 sq.ft., and the summer show is 312,000 sq.ft.

**Show vendors:** Approximately 1,800 vendors in 11 divisions that are broken down as follows:

- At Home — devoted to home products like floor coverings, lighting, accessories, artistic decorative pieces, textiles and wall art.

- EX-TRACTS — aromatherapy, bath and shower gels, body care, essential oils, bath accessories and other personal care items.

- Fashion Accessories — accessories that include costume and sterling silver jewelry, handbags, watches, leather goods, boutique apparel and personal accessories.

- General Gift — largest section of the show, featuring decorative tabletop, casual dinnerware, ceramics, toys, seasonal floral and trim-tree, specialty foods and confections and general import items.

- Handmade — features North American artisans working in ceramic, metals, glass, leather basketry, fiber, paper, mixed media, etc.

- Jewelry (cash and carry) — encompasses a special feature Beaders' Gallery that presents beads, finished handmade jewelry and jewelry making supplies. Fine, sterling and custom designed jewelry, beads, precious/semi-precious stones and jewelry are available for order writing or immediate delivery.

- L.A. Contemporary — section showcasing ▶

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contemporary and innovative designs in a myriad of product categories; a special emphasis is put on cutting edge products from L.A.-based designers.

- **Outdoor Elements** — dedicated to creating the outdoor room, including outdoor furnishings, lighting and garden accents, statuary, planters, etc.

- **Resort, Souvenir & Licensing** — music, vacation/resort apparel, collegiate items, novelty games and gifts, jewelry, streetwear, beach accessories, travel essentials and licensed product.

- **Stationery Etc.** — greeting cards, invitations, paper, partyware, giftwrap, balloons, photo albums, stamps, journals and writing instruments.

- **World Style** — the largest selection of international merchandise in the industry, such as contemporary and traditional furnishings, antiques, artifacts, sculpture, craft and apparel, Native American, Southwest and New Age gifts.

**Buying or perusing:** Buying.

**Educational sessions:** The schedule of education programs includes merchandising and display techniques, trends, customer service and promotions, all presented by the respected leaders in that industry.

#### NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL GIFT FAIR

New York, N.Y.

[www.nyigf.com](http://www.nyigf.com)

**Mission:** The New York International Gift Fair is the largest temporary market in the United States, attracting attendees from all over the world. This is a “must attend” event for anyone in the gift industry — both exhibitor and attendee — as this is the place where trends are established, new products are launched and the industry comes together twice each year.

**When:** The fair is held semi-annually each winter and summer.

**Registration:** The show is open to the trade only, and registration is free.

**Sponsors:** The Gift Fair is managed by George Little Management, LLC.

**Attendance:** 43,000 retailers per show.

**Target markets:** Markets that are represented are general giftware, tabletop and housewares, personal accessories, home furnishings, museum gifts, ethnic, traditional, country and contemporary crafts, specialty foods, contemporary design products, juvenile products and floral products. The general profile of typical attendees come from specialty and department stores, gift shops, jewelry stores, interior designers, importers and distributors of home furnishings, mail order catalogs, museums and galleries, stationery stores, craft retailers and garden centers.

**Geographical region of attendees:** International arena. But heavy concentration within the tri-state area, with top states listed by order of attendance as follows: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Florida, Maryland, California, Virginia, Texas and Illinois. The top countries in attendance are Canada, Japan, England, Mexico, Bermuda, Hong Kong, Australia, Germany and France.

**Dedicated floor space:** The winter show consists of 650,000 sq.ft. and 612,000 sq.ft. during the summer show.

**Show vendors:** Approximately 2,900 vendors in 11 different categories as follows:

- **Accent on Design** — innovative designs in a myriad of product categories including decorative accessories, lighting and home furnishings, housewares, stationery, tabletop, gourmet and general gift merchandise, all based on creativity, originality and good design.

- **Handmade** — international and domestic artisans and designers of handmade merchandise ranging from fashion accessories, jewelry and other crafts, and based on uniqueness, marketability and appropriateness for the market.

- **Just Kidstuff** — upscale products for children of all ages, including bedding, furniture, dolls, toys and games, clothes, books and educational materials.

- **The Museum Source** — devoted to manufacturers, importers and publishers whose products are appropriate for museum gift shops, bookstores, specialty shops, zoos, aquariums and galleries.

- **New & Distinctive Resources** — the newest exhibitors, representing products from all categories.

- **Floral & Garden Accessories** — silk flowers, dried flowers, vases, plant stands, ribbons, outdoor and garden room furniture, decorative tabletop and stationery products with floral motifs.

- **At Home** — products that beautify the home, such as small furniture, lighting, vases, candlesticks, pillows, artwork, floor coverings, etc.

- **General Gift** — largest section of the fair, covering a range of products such as ceramics, stationery, premiums, specialty foods, toys, party lines, trim-a-tree, souvenirs, novelties, etc.

- **Tabletop & Housewares** — offers products that make preparing and entertaining at home easy and special, including bakeware, barware, china, cookware, cutlery, flatware/dinnerware, electrics, gadgets, glassware, kitchenware, table linens and kitchen textiles.

- **Personal Accessories** — people products, including men’s gifts, fashion accessories, jewelry, travelware and personal care.

- **New York’s Newest** — a collection of 300 companies all new to the New York International Gift Fair during the winter market.

**Buying or perusing:** Buying.

**Educational sessions:** A schedule of programs is offered by industry leaders addressing topics on merchandising, display, trends, customer service and promotions. A Retail Tour of some of New York City’s innovative gift stores also offers participants education on the topics covered in the sessions.

#### ORLANDO GIFT SHOW

Orlando, Fla.

[www.orlandogiftshow.com](http://www.orlandogiftshow.com)

**Mission/Background:** The semi-annual Orlando Gift Show is the largest and longest-running temporary gift show in central Florida.

**When:** Held in January, it runs concurrently with the International New Age Trade Show-East (INATS-East). In July/August, it runs concurrently with the Jewelry and Accessories Expo.

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**Registration:** It is a wholesale trade show for professional retail buyers only, with free on-site registration at the show.

**Sponsors:** This show is a partnership venture between leading show producers George Little Management, LLC, Universal Shows, Inc. and Urban Expositions.

**Attendance:** 6,000 attendees in January and August.

**Target markets:** Gift, garden and home accessory retailers.

**Geographical region of attendees:** Retailers located in Northern and Central Florida, as well as the Florida Panhandle.

**Dedicated floor space:** Approximately 58,000 sq.ft. in August and 35,000 sq.ft. in January.

**Show vendors:** The Orlando show offers a wide variety of products/product categories, including those of interest for lawn and garden retailers. This would encompass pottery, planters, statues, sculptures, wind chimes, sundials, candles, garden displays and fountains. Other categories include general giftware, decorative accessories, aromatherapy, greeting cards, paper goods and social stationery, tabletop, destination, resort and tourist merchandise, logo products, shell items, fashion accessories, toys and games, gourmet and jewelry.

**Buying or perusing:** Buying.

**Educational sessions:** Yes, the show offers free business-building, educational seminars to all registered buyers. Previous seminars include Gift Basket Business and Design, Merchandising and Retail Tips. Industry consultants, owners and authors are just some of the types of people who will speak at the Orlando Gift Show.

## SEATTLE GIFT SHOW

Seattle, Wash.

[www.seattlegift.com](http://www.seattlegift.com)

**Mission/Background:** The Seattle Gift Show is the largest trade event in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia. It began in 1929 in Olympia with 15 exhibiting companies and has currently expanded to the Washington State Convention & Trade Center with more than 890 exhibiting companies, representing more than 1,400 booths, with a bi-annual attendance of approximately 13,500 retail buyers.

**When:** Held twice yearly at the end of January and August.

**Registration:** It is free of charge for credentialed attendees in the retail buying trade — it is a business-only event.

**Sponsors:** Exclusively produced

and managed by Western Exhibitors, LLC, with two divisions (Handmade and Personal Style) managed by George Little Management, LLC.

**Attendance:** Approximately 13,500 each show cycle.

**Target markets:** Attendees are storeowners, managers, professional buyers from independent stores/boutiques, department stores, pharmacies, nurseries/garden centers, Internet companies, catalogs, cruise lines, resort areas, etc. ♦

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**Geographical region of attendees:** Mostly the Pacific Northwest — Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and far Northern California.

**Dedicated floor space:** 140,000 net sq.ft.

**Show vendors:** 12 product divisions are exhibited:

• At Home — home furnishings, home décor and home accessories.

• Cash & Carry — featuring general gift items, fashion jewelry, personal accessories and ethnic merchandise.

• FoodFocus — specialty food items, including candies, confec-

tions, coffee, teas, oils and vinegars, etc.

• GardenStyle — a fusion of garden accents, floral accessories and furniture for indoor/outdoor living.

• Gifts & Collectibles — covers a wide range of collectibles, ceramic giftware, toys, party goods, seasonal merchandise, imported goods, etc.

• Handmade — section featuring international and domestic artisans and designers and manufacturers of handmade merchandise.

• Jewelry Vault — a combination of fine and fashion jewelry and one-of-a-kind object d'art, such as beads, watches, etc.

• Northwest Directions — souvenir and resort merchandise, apparel, novelty products and new gift resources both imported and domestically manufactured with an emphasis on the Northwest buyer.

• Personal Style — a juried division dedicated to high-end fashion jewelry, aromatherapy, bath and body products and personal accessories.

• Gift/Stationery & Trend Merchandise — a fun and whimsical division with general gift items, stationery, greeting cards, stickers, gift wrappings, writing instruments, home office accessories and museum store items.

• Village Arts — a multicultural division featuring products from villages around the globe.

• The Vintage Collection — an impressive gathering of vintage, antique and one-of-a-kind items.

**Buying or perusing:** Buying.

**Educational sessions:** Two sessions are offered daily for a nominal cost and cover a wide range of topics from web marketing to visual merchandising, as well as becoming a profitable retailer and hiring staff. Leaders in the retail industry, many who are retail consultants from around the country, present these sessions.

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