

How the West was won



The saying goes that sometimes if you want to get something done, you've got to do it yourself. So thought the group of agents and reps behind the keenly anticipated new South West Furniture Show, which will open its doors from 21-23 September at North Petherton in Somerset.

Max South, chairman of the South West Furniture Manufacturer's Agent and Representatives Federation, explains the situation like this:

"We went to different trade events at hotels and lodges and similar venues but it was patently evident to us as agents that we ought to be doing something ourselves so that's what we decided to do," he says.

The show will be reviving a tradition of furniture trade events in this relatively affluent region of Britain, and hopefully spurring on regional economic growth as well as catering to it, says Max.

"Basically we decided we wanted to make the furniture trade more prominent in the West of England. I think that we all have to push the products and create some excitement for retailers," he says, adding that the region is ripe for sales growth to be made.

"Although the recession bit hard in all areas, it didn't bite quite so hard in the South West," he says.

With preparations in full swing and a 40-strong exhibitor list that includes well-known names such as Willis & Gambier and Carlton Furniture, there is evidence that the show has caught the attention of the trade. How does Max think the idea has been received so far?

"We had a very positive response from the manufacturers and also the reps and agents – there's no doubt about that," he says. "We pitched it at what we think is the right time, and we also think we got the pricing right. We discussed it thoroughly with the reps and agents throughout the creation of the event."

"One agent said from what they'd seen it's going to be a busy show. Our general feedback from the retailers is very positive and if people keep their promises, they're going to come," he adds.

The interest the show has attracted has been reflected in a very positive take-up of exhibitor space, Max adds:

"We've still got people chasing for space now," he says. "I think it's one of these things where people within the trade have realised that they've got to get manufacturing out to more exhibitions as well."

A region ripe for growth

The South West is a particularly important territory to run shows in, Max believes, because the region's manufacturing base



SOUTH WEST FURNITURE SHOW 2010

21st - 23rd September

Sedgemoor Auction Centre, Market Way,
North Petherton, Somerset TA6 6DF

South West Furniture Manufacturers' Agents and Reps Federation (SWFMARF) are pleased to announce the South West Furniture Show to be held at the 'Junction 24' venue – ideally located just off junction 24 of the M5 on the 21st - 23rd September.

Exhibitors include:

- Bedmasters ■ Boston Designs ■ Carlton Furniture ■ Celebrity Motion Furniture ■ Furnico ■ Gainsborough Lounge Suites ■ Homestyle ■ JC MP Smith ■ Relax Seating Solutions ■ Sherbourne Upholstery ■ Vogue Beds ■ Yeoman Upholstery and many more...

For further details on the exhibition contact swfmarf@googlemail.com or visit www.swfmarf.goods.officelive.com

AT A GLANCE

When:
Tuesday 21 September: 9.30am-7.30pm
Wednesday 22 September 9.30am-9.00pm
Thursday 9.30am-4.30pm
Web: <http://swfmarf.goods.officelive.com>

Where:
Sedgemore Auction Centre,
Market Way, North Petherton,
Somerset
TA6 6DF
(Just off junction 24 of M5)

Who:
Some 40 exhibitors, including Willis & Gambier, Carlton Furniture, Sherborne, Vogue Bedding, Joynson Holland, Totem Furniture and many more.

For latest availability contact swfmarf@googlemail.com

is less comprehensive than in other, areas of Britain. "We do have manufacturing down here but, by and large, it's on a relatively small scale," he says, highlighting another reason why regional retailers may welcome a chance to view the offer of manufacturers from the industry at large.

One of the key considerations behind the show was making it easy for retailers to visit. That meant not just finding the right venue, but the right point in the calendar to launch the event in. Even in the early planning stages it became clear that there was a room in the market for accessible, regional shows as well as the major national events such as Interiors in Birmingham and the Manchester Furniture Show.

"There isn't a London show now, so I think regional shows in the south can probably do a bit of infill from that point of view," says Max.

In getting the blend of accessibility and commerciality right, timing is key, he adds:

"I think September is a sensible time for a show because retailers are looking for stock. Given current trading conditions, some may be stuck with a bit more than they'd like to have – but if they've got any sense, they're looking for something that's going to set their business alight. To do that that they're going to need to get to exhibitions," he says.

Although the location might look obscure at first glance, the event has been conveniently located at an attractive venue just off junction 24 off the M5, to make access extra easy, says Max.

"We've tried to make it as simple as possible for the retailers to get here and we've tried to make it as convenient as possible for them to get back on the motorway afterwards. I don't think we could really have done more than that," he says.

The show's organisers have also opted for generous opening hours, again, with an eye to making it easy for retailers to drop by after daytime trading has finished.

"One of the reasons why we decided to open until nine o'clock on the Wednesday night and why we're not shutting until half

past seven on the first night is to give retailers the chance to get away from their businesses," Max says.

"They can maybe leave the business with one of their staff or shut the shop a little early and get down to us with plenty of time to spare. Being where we are on a motorway, they can hopefully get to us reasonably easily," he adds.

Max says this all forms part of a drive to stimulate excitement in the trade and inspire a proactive attitude towards selling furniture regardless of the economic climate through which the trade is passing.

"You can't afford to sit back," he says. "I don't think as a trade we have actually taken the slice of business wealth that's been going about, as opposed to other trades such as the radio and television trade."

People need furniture

Max also casts doubt on the view that furniture is a strictly discretionary purchase and that consumers are focused only on 'necessities' in the current economic climate.

"Anyone can come to you and say, well we don't actually need a suite and we don't need this or that piece of furniture: but the fact is people really do need to furnish their homes. So I think people's priorities are changing, there's no doubt about that."

"Things could be a lot worse, and if we talk ourselves into a problem that's what we'll get," he says. "I think you've always got to be optimistic and the retailers have got to go for it."

With the show just days away, there are still many final preparations to make. But have Max and the rest of the show's organisers got any forecasts for the mood of the show once it's in full swing?

"I think there's going to be quite a few buyers there," he says. "I think once they get there and they see some of the latest products that are on show, I'm sure they'll buy, there's no doubt about it."



List of exhibitors

- AJ Charltons & Sons Ltd
- Ancient Mariner Trading Ltd
- Balmoral Furniture
- Beauty Sleep
- Bedmasters
- Boston Designs Ltd
- Bymacks Upholstery
- Call Salotti SRL
- Carlton Furniture Ltd
- Celebrity Motion Furniture Ltd
- Cintique
- Daneway Sales & Marketing Ltd
- Furnico Ltd
- Gainsborough Lounge Suites
- Healthbeds Ltd
- Heritage Furniture Ltd
- Interlink Furniture Solutions Ltd
- JC & MP Smith
- Joynson & Holland
- Kozee Sleep
- Leemar Upholstery Ltd
- LPK Upholstery Ltd
- M Sadiq Furniture Ltd
- McNally & Finlay Ltd
- Modec Fine Arts
- One Call Furniture Ltd
- Original Bedstead Co Ltd
- Originals by Willis Gambier
- Relax Seating Solutions Ltd
- Relaxsan
- Restus
- Restwell Chairs
- Sherborne Upholstery Ltd
- Taylor's of Cheshire
- Toothill Furniture Ltd
- Totem Furniture Ltd
- Viscotherapy
- Vogue Bedding Ltd
- Willis Gambier Ltd
- Yeoman Upholstery Ltd

* list correct at time of going to press

Cabinet Maker presents a selection of a few of the fine furnishings that will be on display at the South West Show from 21–23 September.

CINTIQUE

Upholstery company Cintique, who have relocated to a larger manufacturing site in Long Eaton, are to exhibit their new chair collection for the volume market at the South West show. The new collection has beech show-wood frames and is available with a selection of fabrics for a fast-track delivery. The display will showcase Cintique's affordable new Eton chair, while the popular Lydia range of sofas and chairs will also be appearing at the show. We look forward to your Cintique visit at the Southwest show. www.cintique.co.uk



TAYLORS OF CHESHIRE

This collection of decorative furniture is crafted in the villages of central Java from recycled wooden pallets, scraps from demolished houses and other structures – plus the leftovers from sawmills etc. The various types of wood are gathered and brought to the villages where local craftsman skillfully fashion it into simple, eco-friendly home furnishings. We offer these products in an effort to support the local economy while cleaning up the environment and preserving trees at the same time.

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Shavington,
Cheshire,
CW2 5AL
01270 651704
Email: sales@taylorsofcheshire.com

RELAXSAN

Hypoallergenic, antibacterial and highly breathable: this is the innovative Bamboo fabric cover of the new exclusive mattress collection 'Magnificent Bamboo' by Relaxsan, which will be presented at the South West Show this month. Unveiled for the first time to the UK and Irish markets at the Manchester Furniture Show in July, this new Relaxsan mattress is proving already hugely popular amongst retailers.

As well as being highly renowned for its antibacterial properties, Bamboo fibre is also completely eco-friendly, nontoxic and biodegradable. Softer than cotton, with a texture similar to a blend of cashmere and silk, the properties of the Bamboo fibre are truly endless.

The 5cm internal layer is composed of seven zones made of waterlattice and has a 2cm quilted Memorex padding for ultra-comfort, and also features a breathable 3D band. All Relaxsan mattresses are 100% made in Italy, come with 12 years warranty and are FIRA certificate. For enquiries, ring 07989 400962 or visit www.relaxsanmagniflex.com



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT <http://swmarf.goods.officelive.com>

TOTEM FURNITURE LTD

Totem will be showing their new Designer Collection which proved very popular with new and existing customers at its launch at Manchester. This collection is for Buyers looking for something different, modern, stylish, non oak and which will stand out on the shop floor. Also on display will be their best selling Provence Collection along with Rustique and Madison.

Tel 01785 600300
Email sales@totemfurniture.co.uk



GAINSBOROUGH

Gainsborough Lounge Suites is looking forward to the South West Show where it has many Loyal Retailers.

Established in 1983, Gainsborough is a very flexible company with over 20 Classic and Contemporary Models to choose from, including Soft Fabrics, Leather and Loose Cover.

All Models are available for Bespoke, a very popular optional tool for our Retailers to use and is often the difference in clinching a sale. Our New Showroom, opened late last year has proven to be 'A Great Hit' with consumers, some travelling great distances via the Retailer to enjoy a positive experience. New Models and Fabrics will be unveiled at the Show. www.gainsborouloungesuites.co.uk



RELAX SEATING

Based in High Wycombe "Relax" seating's attention to ergonomic design and traditional manufacturing techniques have ensured that retailers have a furniture range designed for the important "grey" market. The Petersfield and Carmel Ranges not only offer supreme comfort and support but are also designed with space in mind. With many people moving in to smaller properties as they downsize both ranges are available with chair, sofa and high seat options and are ideal for both the living room and conservatory. With eight wood finishes and a huge selection of contemporary and Traditional fabrics they will "sit well" in any setting. The recently launched retail brochure is available now with a range of Show wood chairs and sofas designed for this important market sector. Order your store copies now: sales@relaxseating.co.uk



"September is a sensible time for a show because retailers are looking for stock."

South West Furniture Manufacturer's Agent
and Representatives Federation



CELEBRITY

Celebrity Motion Furniture are the UK's leading manufacturer of rising/reclining chairs and to help maintain this position they will be launching their new, flexible, Reading Light at the Show. Designed for ease of use from an extra button on the handset, the Reading Light incorporates 18 Low Voltage LED's, the light from which can be directed using the flexible arm to the required position. Also on display will be a range of Celebrity's most popular Zip-Speed riser/recliners including the Woburn range which offers 4 sizes of recliners each with a different seat height, all of which can be delivered to the retailer in any action and any Celebrity fabric within 10 working days. www.celebrity-furniture.co.uk



JC & MP SMITH

An established British manufacturer with over 50 years experience providing high quality service and value. In addition to presenting our best selling ranges we are showcasing brand new designs and cover options across the JC & MP Smith and Toothill Brands.

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High Wycombe
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HP13 7AB
Tel: 01494 474684
Email: sales@jcsmith.co.uk



Heritage Furniture UK Ltd

Unit 5, Audley Hall Mill, Dickens Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 1RN
 Tel: 01254 660 777 Email: sales@heritagefurniture.co.uk

*Cuba
 bedroom
 collection in oak
 launched at the
 South West Furniture Show*

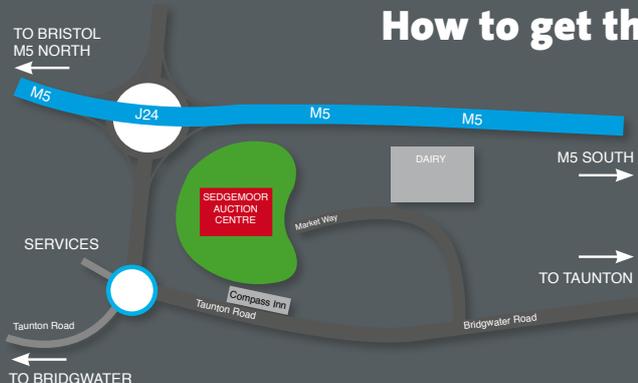
Heritage Furniture UK supplies the very best value solid oak collection in today's highly competitive market. The companies renowned quality and diverse selection of style is well established with the successful Cuba Living range which is available in solid oak and solid sheesham wood, They will also be the long awaited launch of the Cuba Bedroom collection in solid oak at the south west furniture show, the full bedroom collection will be available on display and to order!!



“We’ve tried to make it as simple as possible for retailers to get here.”

South West Furniture Manufacturer’s Agent and Representatives Federation

How to get there



From junction 24 off the M5 follow signs to Bridgwater. At the first roundabout take the first exit towards North Petherton. After passing the ‘Compass Inn’ on your left you will come to a set of traffic lights, take a left at the lights and follow the road in to our car park past the wooden bull.