

## All Things Baking show deemed a success

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by John Unrein

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All Things Baking, which took place in Schaumburg, Ill., Oct. 2-4, lived up to its tagline as "All the things you've ever wanted in a baking show." Thousands of attendees showed up ready to take advantage of the education, hands-on demonstrations, bakery tours and the latest innovations from 145 leading vendors.

Created to serve as the industry's annual marketplace, meeting place and educational forum during the two-year gap in the IBIE rotation, the show was timed perfectly for attendees such as Stanley Bass of The Cheesecake Factory who is installing a second line in his operation. "I'm meeting with vendors with whom I've already placed orders—confirming delivery dates and other details—and I'm finding new vendors. I've written a lot of business on the show floor." Bass also mentioned that he was making good connections that will be useful as he starts adding new products to his mix.

A pleasant surprise to vendors and show organizers alike was the number of international visitors in attendance. Participants hailed from all 48 states, Washington, D.C., the Virgin Islands, and 28 countries including Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Germany, Peru, Guatemala and the UK.

Luc Imberechts of Bakon USA commented, "We came expecting a regional event and were shocked at how many national and international buyers we've seen in our booth. I think it's the education program that's attracted them to the show."

The education program was indeed a strong draw for attendees. Produced by the Retail Bakers of America, AIB International, Kendall College, the RPIA Group and the French Pastry School, the program offered leading-edge instruction focusing on everything from decorating trends to business management and marketing.

Several sessions were sold out, including Determining Product Costs and Profit Margins, Pricing Strategies for Sculpted and Custom Cakes, Freezing Technology, Low Cost Promotions, and Cake Sculpting with Internal Supports. Many show floor demonstrations were also standing room only.

Show organizers were very pleased with the turnout, commenting that this launch event has given them a great foundation on which to build for years to come. Although registration was about 60 percent higher than RBA's standalone event in 2009, exact numbers are not being released. Instead, organizers will be doing qualitative and quantitative research to determine attendee and exhibitor ROO and ROI and to collect information that will help in making the show even better in 2012 and beyond.

"In light of current economic conditions, the inaugural event was highly successful—especially in terms of the quality of buyers present," said Felix Sherman, RBA president. "This is a testament to the strength and vitality of the baking industry in North America."

Next year's All Things Baking will be held in Houston, Texas, Sept. 9-11, 2012.