

## Further growth for Harrogate

With visitor numbers to Harrogate Christmas & Gift 2011 up a staggering 25 per cent on the previous year, the organisers were overwhelmed by a further 10 per cent increase for the 2012 show.

The overall consensus from both exhibitors and visitors is that the new design and layout of the exhibition, incorporating new halls at the Harrogate International Centre, created an incredible buzz and a bustling atmosphere at a level which hadn't been experienced for many years. Order books were overflowing and visitors were leaving happily stocked up with products for the entire year. It has been commented that there is no other exhibition in the UK which caters so specifically for Christmas and gift focussed retailers, in particular garden centres, with one visitor even stating that without Harrogate Christmas & Gift they wouldn't be able to 'do' Christmas.

A substantial presence this year was Premier Decorations which occupied the entire new Hall H, bringing not only its Christmas and gift ranges, but Halloween and garden accessories too. John Athwal, managing director, comments: "This year was one of the best for as long as I can remember. We had a really good time in our new home and saw lots of new customers. We were delighted that both existing and potential new customers made the effort to visit us. With the organisers reporting a 10% increase in visitors, surely Harrogate Christmas & Gift Fair is a must for any serious Christmas decoration buyer and Premier will be back next year."

Despite the festive name of the show, there was a notable increase in the presence of exhibitors with product ranges for the home and garden from interior ornaments, silk flowers and pot pourri to garden sculptures and chimineas. Hill Interiors in particular stands out for its huge range of beautiful furniture and items for the home, displaying an array of products from dining suites and wall units to table lamps, ornaments and a huge collection of message plaques, which appear to be the rage for consumers this year.

Julian Potter, general manager of Hill Interiors, said: "This is the second year we have exhibited at Harrogate Christmas & Gift Fair and the growth of the show is outstanding. The value of our orders in 2012 was three times that of 2011 (which we are happy with!). Garden centres love it as they are quiet at this time of year and a lot of bulk buyers are in big buying mode and are looking at your product before seeing the crowds at Spring Fair. Our customers like to buy at Harrogate as they get the first pick of the new stock and it's a great place to stay."

Simon Anslow, show organiser, concludes: "Harrogate Christmas & Gift has certainly found its niche and is proving to be the first port of call for buyers from the garden centre retail sector as well as those looking specifically for Christmas themed products. We will look to further expand these sectors next year and hope to bring in a bigger and even more diverse range of products to the show."

ends