

CARAVAN SALON DÜSSELDORF: Fresh impetus for caravanning sector

As hoped, the caravanning sector has been given a positive boost by this year's CARAVAN SALON DÜSSELDORF. The world's biggest fair for mobile leisure, which drew to a close on Sunday in Düsseldorf, clearly defied the crisis with an increased number of visitors and good sales figures. The caravanning sector's expectations were fulfilled: after a difficult first half year we are through the worst and business is picking up again.

Delighting at the results, Wilhelm Niedergöcker, Managing Director at Messe Düsseldorf GmbH, said: "161,200 visitors from 37 countries were registered at this year's CARAVAN SALON (2008: 158,000) and clearly exceeded our expectations of 150,000 visitors. Furthermore, considering the current economic climate in Europe it is all the more positive to note that approximately 18,200 visitors found their way to Düsseldorf from abroad." Niedergöcker added "CARAVAN SALON DÜSSELDORF is the sector's foremost trade fair, traditionally accounting for roughly 10% of the industry's annual turnover. This year CARAVAN SALON created a particularly important momentum - 49% of visitors came to CARAVAN SALON with intentions to buy."

"The attendance and the number of deals closed, which both clearly surpassed our expectations, have rewarded the exhibitors' commitment to CARAVAN SALON 2009. These results prove that the efforts undertaken by leisure vehicle manufacturers to develop lighter, more economic and lower-cost RVs also paid off," said Klaus Förtsch, President of CIVD, the Caravanning Industry Association, summing up results of CARAVAN SALON 2009. He continued: "CARAVAN SALON 2009 underpins the recovery trends in the caravanning sector felt since the beginning of the second half of 2009. This strengthens the sector's confidence to return to growth in 2010."

CARAVAN SALON DÜSSELDORF has set itself the task of making caravanning something for everyone to experience. This was achieved not only by 580 exhibitors from 25 countries, with their extensive ranges of motor homes and caravans as well as accessories and travel destinations, but also by an entertainment programme centring on mobile leisure, which met with great approval amongst visitors. 4,400 visitors in total watched the multi-vision shows at the Caravanning Show Center, featuring extraordinary caravanning trips in Siberia and along the Silk Road and the Panamericana. 1,600 visitors participated in the Caravanning

Wiiathlon.

The exhibitors of CARAVAN SALON, whose expectations were exceeded across the board, voiced extreme satisfaction. “The fair proves that caravanning does meet with a lot of interest,” explained Dr. Holger Siebert, General Manager of Eura Mobil GmbH, and went on to say: “This year we had more first-time visitors but also many visitors who already own one of our vehicles and came to see us in a very targeted manner, knowing exactly what they wanted.” The trend towards higher-quality sales conversations at the stand with very well-informed visitors asking the right questions was also observed by Giovanni Marcon, Chairman of the Board at Knaus Tabbert GmbH. At the same time, he said, there was a certain shift from motor homes to caravans as well as towards van campers and lightweight vehicles. “Customers pay the same attention to weight now with caravans as they do with motor homes. This is also in part due to the fact that the towing vehicles have less HP than they used to.”

Special mention was made of the positive mood governing the fair. Hermann Pfaff, a member of the Hymer AG board, explained: “This positive mood at the stands and among the dealers is really key because the dealers also carry it over to the post-fair business. All in all the response has been very good and we are on the right track to achieving last year’s results and, hence, the target we have set ourselves.” Reinhard Löhner, General Manager of Concorde Reisemobile GmbH, also delighted at the good sales and new “sprouting” optimism in the industry, commenting on the avid demand from abroad: “For years we have had a great many customers from Belgium and France here. Now we also register ever more buyers from the Netherlands.”

After a tough year the upstream suppliers are also viewing the future with optimism again: “We do not expect a V-shaped business cycle but there are no signs of another downswing either. Quite on the contrary – we have heard a lot of encouragement from our European customers and believe that things will pick up again, especially from January/February,” explained Joachim Kinscher, Executive Vice-President of the Dometic Group and board member of the Caravanning Industry Association. He added, “On top of this, roughly one third of the fair visitors are interested in refitting existing vehicles or upgrading them, which is of crucial importance to us. We have received plenty of qualified enquiries for this. The total package makes us cautiously optimistic so that we go home from Düsseldorf in a clearly better mood than when we came here.” Of particular interest were the first particle filters for refitting diesel engines, which were on

show at this year's CARAVAN SALON. "Visitors took great interest in the filter consulting provided by the CIVD. Mainly visitors who already own a vehicle wanted to know whether there was a refitting option, how expensive it is and which sticker the vehicle is given afterwards. We also received enquiries from visitors faced with the decision of buying second-hand vehicles," said Ralph Binder, Press Spokesman of the CIVD.

The German camping tourism operator can expect overnight stays to remain good: "The demand registered here at CARAVAN SALON confirms the good sector figures from the first six months, implying that we are also in for a good autumn. Visitors came with very concrete holiday plans and ask for special bargains for the autumn break. All in all, the demand this year was considerably higher than in previous years," said Daniela Leipelt, General Manager of the Federal Camping Association in Germany, (BVCD e.V.).

The next CARAVAN SALON DÜSSELDORF will take place from 27 August (trade visitor and media day) to 5 September 2010.

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