

# Hospitality Match 2007 Moves Away from the "Las Vegas Strip"

by AnnMarie Marano

**H**ENDERSON, Nevada — Hospitality Match, an invitation-only event that brings hospitality suppliers together with FF&E buyers, produced by Sipco Publications & Events, hit the desert for the third time this year, but in a much more unlikely place.

"We chose Green Valley Ranch in Henderson, NV, because all our attendees are quite tired of being on a large strip property," said Michael Schneider, president, Sipco Events. "At GVR we were one of two groups, so from an event planning perspective we received better attention from GVR staff. Furthermore, we took 150 of their 400 rooms so we didn't get lost in a huge property like you would on the strip. Finally, GVR is an entity unto its own. We didn't have to worry about unwanted distractions or losing our attendees. We were able to keep everyone together."

In previous years, Match was held at the Rio and the Venetian.

It was also announced that the company plans to move the event further west and change the timing to make it more convenient for all those interested in attending.

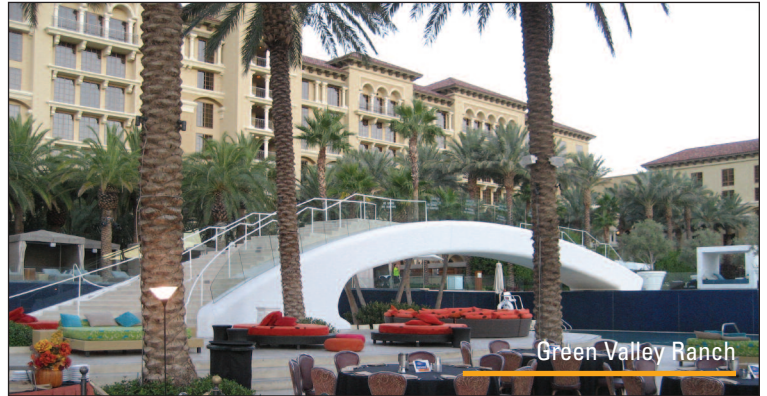
"Going forward, we plan on changing the timing and location of

Match USA. For the past three years, we have had Match USA in Vegas in October. Since many of our attendees have experienced 'Vegas burn-out' we are seeking an exclusive and remote spa resort property on the west coast in 2008," Schneider said. "In 2009, we will bring the event to the East coast. As for the timing, October proved to be difficult for all attendees as a very busy time of the year. Therefore, we are looking to move the event to July so all we have to contend with is people's vacations. We will continue to run the event on a Thursday-Saturday schedule so attendees miss the minimum amount of time out of the office."

First time attendee, Adam Pollock, FireFarm Lighting, said GVR provided a much more relaxed environment and "I think there was more opportunity to interact with the other Match attendees because there weren't as many options to dissipate to after events."

"We have seen a flood of new work come in this last half of the year. I think the combination of both events (Match and HD Boutique in Miami) has provided us with some great new opportunities to take the business in new directions and evolve," he said.

Chris Roman, director of furnishings for Kashwere LLC (also a first time attendee), says the event was a



Green Valley Ranch

great way to introduce themselves to the hospitality industry.

"Our furnishings and upholstery fabric is relatively new to Kashwere which is why we wanted to attend the event originally. There seemed to be a number of genuinely interested designers wanting to use our fabric in current and future projects so we're following up with all of them. If nothing else, we've started to get our name out to the hospitality design industry."

Roman agreed that being away from the strip was a definite advantage. "I truly believe it allowed for fewer distractions and created a more intimate event because everyone was at the same resort."

"I think the strip would have taken away from the focus of what we were there for," said Brian Thompson with Impex, producers of full bath interior/kitchen packages. "We have also taken steps to finalize our green initiative," he reported. "We'll be the first mass producer of custom millwork from China able to offer LEED points to projects."

Hospitality Match once again offered two informative seminars to its attendees: a keynote address by Brian Thornton, director of design for MGM Mirage and a seminar focusing on sustainability (speakers included Max Mohan, Pacific Century Group, Marcia Weese, 4240 Architecture, Jennifer Termini,

Koncept Design, Jonathan Wolk, Centrepoint Architecture, Kristine Steffen, Architectural Concepts and Jane Humphrey, the Puccini Group.)

Thornton addressed what MGM has in the works for both Vegas and beyond. The Bellagio will be renovated as well as New York New York. Of course, their focus will also be on Project City Center.

Thornton also offered some advice to the vendors in the audience, telling them to approach MGM through their designers. He said not to go through the properties directly as they don't understand the purchasing process.

Speakers at the sustainability seminar gave a synopsis on what they've been doing to add to the green movement.

"In the hotel industry, I think water consumption will be the biggest driving factor in the next few years," said Jonathan Wolk, Centrepoint Architecture. "There's a tendency in this country to tear things down and build them new, when really you can make the best of what you have."

"We want to absorb knowledge, educate others and take action, while being profitable. Sustainability is thinking about the choices that we make before we make them," said Jennifer Termini, Koncept Design. **F&FI**

Jonathan Wolk, Centrepoint Architecture (who spoke at the sustainability seminar), Donny Dana, Impex, Momoko Morton, Naka Design and Brian Thompson, Impex

