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grand finale

FIG hosts an end-of-season clearance sale open to the public.

By Holly Haber

At Fashion Industry Gallery, the finale is just the beginning.

The boutique mart's latest innovation is FIG Finale, a public clearance sale where area stores offer their end-of-season merchandise to a bargain-hunting public.

The inaugural FIG Finale, held Feb. 3 and 4 on the second floor of the building,

drew about 1,500 consumers eager to peruse fall goods discounted up to 75 percent from such top area fashion stores as Forty Five Ten, Rich Hippie and Premium 93. Fall samples were also available at half the wholesale price tag from a handful of companies, including Garfield & Marks and the Federico Mariel and Launch showrooms.

There are plans to hold the sale twice a year; the next one will be sometime in August or early September, according to Gavin Smith, FIG director.

"We've discussed having this the whole time we were planning the building," Smith said. "We are not open to the public, but this is an opportunity for us to promote the stores and our tenants. If you help the store make money, you only become more endeared to the store."

Retailers paid \$50 for each

merchandise fixture they used, and each shopper paid a \$10 entrance fee. Merchants staffed their own booths, and most accepted cash only.

"It was fantastic," said Larry Gayao, assistant manager at Premium 93, which carries labels such as Daryl K and Ted Baker. "It worked both ways, to introduce people to FIG and for the stores to be able to get rid of some stuff that they weren't able to sell."

Premium 93 set up three racks of clothing and sold about half the goods, he said.

K.P. McNeill, co-owner of the Billy Reid brand men's store, was also enthusiastic.

"We were really pleased with the traffic and totally blown away with how folks were spending," he said. "In terms of volume, we came in over double our projected numbers. I mean, in the first few hours, we had guys falling over each other grabbing stuff — it was pretty frantic. Another strong point for us was that because of our exclusive distribution strategy, this was a great way for us to move excess production runs, random prototypes and one-of-a-kind samples. And we were able to get the collection in front of a very sophisticated customer — many of whom we had not had in our stores yet — which was an unexpected plus."

Most of the 20-odd stores were from Dallas, including Cotton Island, Elements, Krimson & Klover, Sebastian's Closet and Tootsies.

"If they had one every month, I would totally be there," said Kristen Campbell, a theater publicist who came to FIG Finale and nabbed a camisole, a cropped blazer, two pairs of shoes and a T-shirt for a total of \$185. "The sale was perfect for me because my current salary does not allow me to shop at full price at places like Forty Five Ten and Premium 93, but I love the clothes."

In other FIG news, Poleci designer Janice Levin-Krok will be a special guest at March market, and will be feted at a Thursday evening soiree in the lobby and adjacent park.

In addition, Smith said that the Shop temporary show that launched in October should be bigger in March.

"Shop will be back — we have a huge start on that," he said. "I feel like we will be oversold again. It was more than 50 [vendors] the first time... I think we'll have 75-plus vendors at Shop."

About 75 vendors are expected at Shop in March.



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