



An Optimal experience

Anita Morrison-Fokken is impressed by the many areas of interest at the recent Opti Munich show

The first Opti Munich was held in Munich in 1998 and this year 470 exhibitors from 26 countries welcomed 22,700 visitors from 69 different countries. The fair covered an area of 40,000m² over four halls. As expected, the product spectrum included frames, lenses, contact lenses, instruments and shop fittings from all the well known market players. The emphasis was very definitely on frames, although there was a buzz of excitement on all stands.

The 'walk of frame' was a selection of glass display cases where manufacturers were able to showcase their trade highlights and new developments. An interesting offer for new or small businesses launching this year was the Opti-Box, an all-inclusive



Handmade with embedded gemstones



The walk of frame

package helping with stand design and build. Innovative frame and stand designs from young artists were on show in the YES! area.

Innovation was also to be found on the exhibition stands with upside-down bottles with lights in, seaside beach chairs, whole kitchen interiors! Whacky, colourful, innovative and exciting designs were indicative of the range of frames on offer. Retro was one of the main themes, with large eye-sized frames in bright colours. The overarching themes were quality, individuality and versatility. Gold and titanium frames featured alongside leather and jewel encrusted models, as well as wood and buffalo horn.

Crystaluche, distributed through the Ronyero group, produces handmade frames with embedded gemstones.

Model M6009 (pictured left) shows how this has been realised in a frame with a true retro look. Necklaces and earrings to match are available for all designs.

Frame versatility was demonstrated by a range of suppliers including Wildwechsel, which was launched in Munich. Antonia and Martin Koberg have developed a system that enables you to customise rimless frames with colourful accessories.

Menrad, in conjunction with Zeiss, also demonstrated a versatile frame system. The ErgoFlexx is a modular system that provides 6,180 different combinations. All parts come in a space saving system box.

Perhaps the most colourful of the versatile frames were Change Me! by Vistan. The company's website shows all the possible frame and side choices which add up to 10,000 different combinations! In the UK they are distributed by Harrow Optical Services.

Opti-Forum

The lecture and round-table programme Opti Forum was a series of 15-minute presentations mainly from higher education establishments. Topics included viewing behaviour and head position of those who wear glasses, the measurement of individual parameters for personalised varifocals, and the measuring technology for sports lenses. Presentations also covered sales

Impressions of UK exhibitors

William Morris Eyewear recognises that Germany is a huge market and has exhibited here four times already. 'Optrafair could learn a lot from this exhibition,' commented managing director Robert Morris. Lilia Crofton, sales manager at Jai Kudo, which has been exhibiting at Opti-Munich for three years, said the show was 'fashion forward' and showcases modern, inspired eyewear. Furthermore she found Munich 'grand, beautiful and highly organised, with good food and shopping with attractive pricing.'

- Booth and Bruce has been coming to Opti-Munich for over 10 years. Since the company has a strong European customer base, the show is always profitable and the representatives were of the opinion that Opti Munich is good value for money and easier to reach than Milan.
- Mark Keaney, area sales manager for Continental Eyewear, has been exhibiting in Germany for over 10 years and finds the show to be fun, edgy, and enthusiastic.
- Tom Davies, of TD Tom Davies, says Opti is 'typically German: efficient, well organised and dignified'.



techniques and how to inspire one's customers, particularly through attention to shop design. Titles that made me look twice included 'Sustainability – a topic for semi-vegetarians' and 'Climate-neutral shop fitting'.

There were also 45-minute podium discussion sessions on hot topics also relevant to the UK market – internet trading, introduction of repeat eye tests, publicity for contact lenses to improve following a reported double figure dropout rate. Glasses on credit were also up for debate. A company called Brillenabo works with optical outlets and promotes zero per cent finance on spectacles paid for over a certain time period.

All the presentations had simultaneous translation into English and took place in an open arena in the C2 hall, so it was possible to dip in and out of the action.

Equipment

DOMS Eye technology gave Opti another exclusive with its Phorostar 600, the world's smallest phoropter. A friendly passing optician (Markus Jörissen) was happy to have his photo taken while modelling it. He said it was 'surprisingly comfortable'. The Phorostar combines the advantages of a trial frame and a phoropter, and the patient can assume a comfortable posture. Lens changes are driven by a touch screen display with a range from -21.50DS to +23.25DS with +/-6.00DC. This can be yours for around €12,200.

The Gravurenfinder progressive markings directory is one of those really useful items: a book that has



Markus Jörissen tries out the world's smallest phoropter

2,200 different PAL engravings listed. It is published by Lumos, unfortunately at the moment only in German, although the diagrams are almost self-explanatory, at a price of €19.50. However, the good news is that it is currently being trialled as an internet version, to be launched some time after Easter. Even more good news is that the e-version with even more markings will be available free of charge. To help you see the engravings in the first place, Lumos has a desk top instrument that is simplicity itself: the Visualize. It is distributed in the UK through Mainline.

The Southwest German Optical Organisation SWAV displayed its

'Sehtestmobil', a mobile eye testing unit. It is a converted caravan that cost in total around €100,000, a third of which was spent on the conversion and the optical equipment. The organisation hires it out to members to use either for domiciliary visits, screening, or publicity events. It was impressive, but rather cosy.

When talking to exhibitors, there was some discussion about Opti's place in the top three European exhibitions: Silmo, Mido and Opti. For the first time, some Italian brands premiered at Opti instead of Mido. Taking place at the beginning of the calendar year certainly gives Opti a head start and sets a benchmark for the others. ●



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Research conducted on behalf of show organisers GHM showed that 91.4 per cent of visitors state they visit Opti Munich to see new products. This year, there were many new products launched and in particular new lenses on display. The theme from many lens manufacturers was all about differentiating services and providing better customer care.

‘Today’s consumer expects more from the consultancy process... Therefore we have developed an exclusive concept allowing you to differentiate yourself against the retail optical chain, which also allow you to increase your lens sales.’

This describes the thinking behind the ‘Zeiss Vision Analysis’ concept, which is aimed at the medium sized, independent optician and aims to help them be more successful in selling more than one pair of spectacles to the consumer.

Essilor focused not only on differentiation, but also on in-store staff motivation, and ways to increase the average value of each sale, primarily using point of sale material promoting the combination of Crizal and Transitions.

On the product side, Hoya Vision Care launched its Eyvia 1.74 index plastic lenses. The benefit to the consumer is a thinner lens; a patient with a prescription of +6.00D will see a 1mm reduction in centre thickness compared to a 1.6 index plastic lens.

German based Mail Shop re-launched two Freeform progressives, whose designs have been upgraded: the Indi an advanced design progressive and Indi Fit, an individualised design progressive.

Star quality

Rodenstock announced a wide range of new products and initiatives. However, the combination of Boris Becker and the presentation of the new EyeLT progressive lens created so much interest that the product launch had to be postponed to give the autograph hunters and the press time with the former tennis star.

The EyeLT (Eye Lens Technology) uses different cylindrical refraction data for close and far vision within the same progressive-addition lens. According to the textbooks, until now this has not been possible in progressive lenses. EyeLT aims to improve close vision performance by 25 per cent, so wearers of progressive-addition lenses will benefit significantly.

Clear progress

Helen Kendall-Tobias of Strategy with Vision (SWV) reports on lens developments at Opti Munich



Show stopper: Boris Becker signing autographs on the Rodenstock stand

The Aveo single-vision lens has been specifically designed for emerging presbyopes. The lens is manufactured using digital surfacing technology and has an addition of +0.50D in the near portion. It is particularly suitable for people who use notebooks, smart phones or read from e-books.

Rodenstock has also developed an Ipad app to demonstrate the features and benefits of its lens range. It can also carry out a range of visual tests, developed in conjunction with Heiko Pult, a German optician. The app is available from Ipro, priced €50.

A new generation of ColorMatic IQ photochromatics is being launched, with an improved darkening and lightening time – which, (although not yet confirmed with data) may be faster than Transitions VI. They will be available in brown, grey, grey-green and orange, and on 1.6 and 1.67 substrates.

After six months of testing with German opticians, from March, practitioners will be able to order Rodenstock lenses with a visible laser engraving (R) on the lens near the temple.

Rupp+Hubrach launched Arancia Transitions, an orange filter lens. This blocks part of the blue light spectrum and so improves contrast definition when worn outdoors. Combined with Transitions technology the lens has an absorption of 30 per cent in the non-activated state, to 85 per cent when activated.

Seiko returned to Opti after being absent in 2010, and launched the Xception programme. This is a service for opticians to contact Seiko and order special products eg:

- Adjusted base curves in multifocal and single-vision lenses of 1.67 to 1.50
- SuperCleanCoat with anti-static and electromagnetic radiation protection
- Hard coatings for high demands on hardness and heat resistance in specific occupations
- Mirror coatings.

In the Seiko Emblem range a new 1.50, 1.60 and 1.67 Transitions lens was launched as well as a 1.50 Polarised and 1.50 Drivewear lens.

Shamir was again showing ‘Hektor’ (first seen at Silmo 2010). This is a measurement tool designed to analyse how the eye moves in sports such as cycling, golf and tennis. The unit analyses the head and eye movements to identify the main viewing field of the user, allowing the practitioner to decide the ideal frame width. These data can be sent direct to Shamir for a recommendation of the correct Attitude lens.

Consumer study

Transitions has carried out a consumer study among over 1,000 spectacle wearers in Germany. It found that 59 per cent of spectacle wearers do not know there are lenses which darken when exposed to sunlight, but of those that have photochromic lenses, 95 per cent of all consumers are very satisfied with them. The research showed that, on average, a spectacle wearer is prepared to pay between €90-100 retail for photochromic lenses. This information will form the basis of the advertising platform in Germany, from March. ●

● Strategy with Vision is a team of consultants to the eyewear and eye care industry. The company has functional capabilities in strategy development, marketing and sales, operational consultancy, market research, vision care market models, supply chains, project planning and implementation, distribution, retail development