



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Niche Fair™ Forges New Connections Between Retailers and the Maker Movement

- *Niche Fair™ helps modern shopkeepers meet growing consumer demand for unique, undiscovered artisan products*
- *The event is the only wholesale gift show that focuses exclusively on connecting retail buyers with a curated collection of makers and small batch manufacturers*

FLINT, MI, November 1, 2017—Take a cue from big box retailers: Niche is here to stay.

Bon-Ton's ["Close to Home" initiative](#) has placed locally-made apparel, accessories, jewelry, and gifts in Bon-Ton, Bergner's, Boston Store, Carson's, Elder-Beerman, Herberger's and Younkers stores since 2016.

Target's \$10 million makeover of its Nicollet Mall store in 2017 tested a "Made in MN" section featuring goods produced by 11 local merchants—the concept, among other upgrades, is expected to produce a [2-4 percent sales lift](#) for every store the retail giant remodels.

Range.me's Lisa Goller, reporting on [upcoming retail trends](#), explains that, "Growing consumer demand for upscale, authentic goods means more retail companies will offer artisan and culinary products"

There will be no better opportunity to stay competitive by connecting with the kinds of artisan makers and small batch wholesalers Goller describes than **Niche Fair™**, a new event being



launched in February 2018 in Cleveland, OH by Mercantile Events & Marketing.

Managing director and founder, Stephanie Jones, who also leads Mercantile's successful portfolio of industry-related businesses and events, sees Niche Fair™ as an opportunity to play "matchmaker" between forward-thinking retailers and the makers of compelling, authentic products that are often overlooked or missing at the industry's larger gift shows.

"Niche Fair™ is a paradigm shift in terms of what the industry is used to. It's the new frontier of maker-focused wholesale gift shows. We aren't asking buyer to skip the big market but rather add Niche Fair™ to your calendar, because you won't find 75% of the exhibitors there anywhere else. We've built Niche to be a completely new order-writing wholesale show experience. There won't be stilt-walkers or aisles lined with importers and rep groups. We're about creating real connections between gritty, hard-working makers and the retailers who benefit from their products."

Marla Sandford, owner of the retail shops Yellow Dog Marketplace in Goodrich, MI and Little Yellow Dog in Holly, MI, plans to attend.

"As a shopkeeper in this day and age of Amazon, you have to give customers an experience. If I can tell someone why I'm carrying a product, why it's here, and what its story is, I've got a better shot at making the sale. It starts a conversation. I go to the big shows, but I'm excited for the opportunity presented by Niche Fair™ to get in on the ground floor with new vendors. It's so much more personal at a smaller venue."

Stacey Barrett-Brooks, a retail industry professional who brings 12+ years of experience to her role as Mercantile's Executive Director, is excited by the new direction Niche Fair™ is taking.

"What makes Niche Fair™ so special is most gift shows have a section or a category for the maker movement. The difference is that Niche Fair™ isn't a section—it's the entire show. The buyers who go to the big shows are going to see more options from the mass-produced side of the industry. Coming to Niche, they're going to see makers and vendors not showing at the traditional shows. It's right on track with the trends and with what's happening now."

Barrett-Brooks also highlights The Spark™, Niche Fair's affordably-priced workshop series—featuring world-class trainers from Zingerman's ZingTrain, Jerrod Sumner from Brandtabulous and other industry professionals—as indicative of the event's commitment to the success of all participants.

"It's such a breath of fresh air to walk into an arena like this and to be with a company that actually wants everyone to succeed. If we didn't start Niche Fair™, or if it wasn't an option for these small batch producers, you wouldn't see these products coming to the wholesale world anytime soon."

“Consumers are begging for more curated, authentic products,” Jones summarizes. Retailers looking to capitalize on this trend need look no further than Niche Fair™ to find them.



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Niche Fair™ is run by a visionary leadership team with combined experience ranging from wholesale show production to retail markets drawing tens of thousands. The event will be held February 23-24 at the Huntington Convention Center, Cleveland, OH. More information can be found at www.nichefair.com.

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