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NEW YORK —Pleased with the results of last week's Tabletop Show here, most vendors nonetheless talked about the need for more long-term planning and increased flexibility with their retail partners as a way to counteract the rising costs of doing business.

Prices are going up (one vendor estimated an initial rise of 5 to 25 percent) as a result of rising factory costs in China, but generally, retailers are accepting manufacturer increases, industry members said. Price increases may adversely affect the opening price point tier more than any other, said Sal Gabbay, president of Gibson. The next step will be implementing more creative ways to give consumers the value they crave while preserving some degree of profitability.

Morale at the show was high; some manufacturers believe the business is on an upswing and that 2011 business, while not without its challenges, will show continued improvement. Some even said they had their best show in years. In addition, some European companies have quietly stepped back into the American market after a brief hiatus, with a greater showroom presence here in New York.

New product was plentiful, though carefully considered. Introductions were price-conscious and mindful of consumers' true needs, but there was plenty of fashion and trend-right looks. Organic themes and shapes—particularly florals, single branches with leaves or oversized single leaves—prevailed. Paisley and other prints inspired by textiles are becoming popular. Colors are either bright or subtle; taupe was one of the leading neutral tones. Embossing and reactive glazes were the predominant finishing techniques, and in several instances, those two techniques were combined in one piece.

Beverageware is big. Mugs—whether traditional ceramic or thermal and silicone-lidded—are strong sellers. There were also more introductions in stemware and barware geared toward

specific types of alcohol (like wine or whiskey).

[Tabletop & Gifts News](#)

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