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TOURISM

# HK WRESTLES BACK BIG TRADE SHOWS

Return of jewellery, beauty and fruit events in 2023 will boost the city's edge, tourism board says

Mia Castagnone  
mia.castagnone@scmp.com

Four global trade shows will return to Hong Kong in 2023 after a coronavirus-enforced hiatus during which several relocated temporarily to other cities.

Jewellery & Gem World Hong Kong and Jewellery & Gem Asia Hong Kong will both return to the city next year, according to the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

While the former was held in Singapore this year, a scaled-back Jewellery & Gem Asia Hong Kong was held in the city in 2022 without any international participants because of tough quarantine rules.

The returning trade shows would give the city "an edge" when it came to attracting more international business events, said Kenneth Wong, general manager of exhibitions at the board.

"Their return highlights Hong Kong's strong fundamentals, favourable business environment [and] rich tourism offerings," he said.

This comes amid a slow scale-back of the Covid-19 restrictions in the city. November saw events including the Hong Kong Monetary Authority's first Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit, followed by the return of the Rugby Sevens, which had not been held in the city for three years.

Jewellery & Gem World Hong Kong would be held at AsiaWorld-Expo and the Convention and Exhibition Centre on September 18-24, while Jewellery & Gem Asia Hong Kong would take place from June 22-25 at the exhibition centre in Wan Chai, the tourism board said yesterday.

"The last three years have proved the jewellery sourcing experience is simply not the same without our fully fledged, international business-to-business [B2B] fairs," said David Bondi, senior vice-president at Informa Markets in Asia, which organises both the jewellery shows.

Cosmoprof Asia, the largest B2B beauty exhibition in the Asia-Pacific, will return to Hong

Kong from November 12-17 at AsiaWorld-Expo. This year's edition was held in Singapore.

Premier fresh-produce fair Asia Fruit Logistica, which was held in Bangkok this year, will also return to Hong Kong next November. The fair had been held in the city since 2008.

It was a strategic decision to return, its organisers said.

"We've missed Hong Kong because of its unrivalled efficiency, connectivity, ease of doing business, favourable trade policies and dynamic market," said David Axiotis, managing director of organiser Global Produce Events (HK).

The tourism board said it had attracted more than 30 major B2B

conventions in the next few years to the city. In total, these events are expected to draw more than 300,000 participants.

It took at least six to nine months, ideally up to 12 months, to prepare a trade show so that organisers could arrange better resources, Market Hubs Intelligence founder Lierence Li said.



**We've missed Hong Kong because of its unrivalled efficiency ... and dynamic market**

DAVID AXIOTIS, EVENT ORGANISER

"Traffic is very important," Li said, adding exhibitors wanted to make sure the money put into a show paid off.

This would require open borders with the mainland, Li said. The city was not attractive enough to draw buyers on its own, and businesspeople wanted to be able to make trips to factories and fairs on the mainland as well, while stopping over in the city, he added.

These events, however, might not have an immediate impact on the city, others said.

"Hong Kong's business activity and economy will pick up gradually, but it won't be rebounding immediately to pre-Covid-19 levels," said Martin Wong, director and head of research at Knight Frank Hong Kong.

