

# Clarion Gaming Managing Director predicts landmark London shows for 2010

Julian Graves became Managing Director of Clarion Gaming Exhibitions in May of this year. Far from being a stranger to the London Shows, Graves was previously Marketing and Commercial Director for ATE, the exhibitions company owned by UK trade association BACTA, where he was responsible for ATEI/ICE helping to launch ICEi, the remote gaming event which has gone on to be such an important part of the Earls Court experience.

**Q: How do you feel heading up what are the most international exhibitions in the industry?**

**JG:** I was drafted in from my job as Group Marketing Director to lead the shows and I'd like to say that it's great to be back heading up an organising and marketing team which is both experienced and committed. ATEI/IGE operates in some unique sectors and has some unique characters which I'm delighted to be engaging with. I am relishing the challenges of bringing value to our clients in what are demanding times for all of us.



Julian Graves,  
MD – Clarion  
Gaming  
Exhibitions

**Q: How have the 'demanding times' you referred to impacted on the exhibitions?**

**JG:** As of September, four months ahead of the exhibitions going live, the figures for ATEI/IGE showed that we are at over 80 per cent capacity with more than 240 exhibitors contracted. To be 80 per cent full at this stage of the marketing cycle and set against the broader trading backdrop

is extremely encouraging. For visitors the interface between amusements and gaming is an important one. We have some really exciting initiatives under progress and we are engaged in discussions with some very big UK and international organisations. ATEI is now on the ground floor where our customers have asked to be. We have to recognise that ATEI is a brand that has navigated various ups and downs since the 1930s – the only event to (temporarily) cause it to cease was World War II and once that was over it bounced straight back. ATEI is amongst the best known brands in the amusements and gaming sectors and long may that continue.

**Q: What can visitors expect to see at the exhibitions?**

**JG:** In my opinion, what the shows deliver can be summarised in two key words: product and opportunity. We know that manufacturers hold back their product launches and timetable their R&D cycles to be able to launch in London. Visitors attending Earls Court do so safe in the knowledge that they will come away from the show with a raft of new product ideas. Exhibitions are all about delivering the opportunity to see new products that will make a difference. That's why international events which have influencers from 100-plus countries are so vital to the business. It's the geographical mix of innovators on show at Earls Court that makes the proposition for our visitors so appealing. With manufacturers really working hard to develop new high income product and the first signs of the world economy beginning to recover, I think that it's going to be a great show. Every ground breaking product and technology that has impacted the international amusements and gaming industry has been launched in London and I see no reason why 2010 should not also be a landmark edition for the business.

**Q: With budgets under even closer scrutiny is there the risk that people will source products and suppliers by simple desk research and not need to attend exhibitions?**

**JG:** Quite the opposite: evidence shows that the most important time to use exhibitions is when trading conditions are poor. It's during these times that businesses require inspiration and when so much can be achieved by being with colleagues and innovators. One of the key benefits ATEI/IGE can offer visitors is the opportunity to discuss product with the people that created them – the originators. Why is that important? Because you get to hear the real issues, you receive the in-depth consultancy, the inside track on new developments, and the commitment on after sales. The buying process is quite a complex one and the depth of information that's required can best be gained from speaking with manufacturers face-to-face. Serious buyers always want to speak with the manufacturers or originators first –and that's why they attend exhibitions in the first place; to have access to the people that matter and to the people who can have a positive impact on their business. ATEI/IGE has the manufacturers. Our exhibitors are manufacturers with R&D budgets, not representative companies, which is crucial.

**Q: Can you explain the status of the International Gaming Expo and its credentials?**

**JG:** IGE is the international centre of gaming excellence with leading developers and suppliers of equipment to the low stake street market, bingo, remote gaming, high stake casino, and betting/video lottery sectors all in attendance. Confirmed exhibitors comprise the world's biggest brands within their respective sectors including Novomatic, Astra, IGT Group, WMS Gaming, Bally, TCS John Huxley, Aristocrat, Atronic, Merkur, JPM, TAB Austria, Play4Win, Boss Media, Playtech, MicroGaming, Games Media. IGE is a renowned business show at which best in class manufacturers and developers will be launching best in class products and providing best in class first-hand insight to buyers. It is unequivocally the best place to do business. Added to this we've just announced the decision taken in consultation with our stakeholders to bring in the Betting

Show as a stand-alone, dedicated component of IGE. You won't find a better, more influential, more comprehensive gaming event anywhere in the world. As Robert White, IGT-UK Group Vice President said: "IGE is a pivotal part of our business year with many key products for UK, international and remote gaming audiences being presented for the very first time. IGE provides the ideal platform for meeting up with key executives from across the entire spectrum of our business to discuss the latest products and the future direction of the business.

**Q: Has the credit crunch impacted on the way in which you are marketing the exhibitions?**

**JG:** Clarion makes a huge investment in bringing buyers to London. The overall marketing and communications campaign comprises adverts in at least 60 media channels in 25 countries, viral campaigns and an international media relations campaign. In fact, the campaign has gone up another level with our database of industry buyers and influencers passing the 200,000 mark. Our database is universally regarded as being the most accurate and comprehensive in the business, covering gaming, gambling and betting professionals based in more than 190 jurisdictions and sovereign states. What that means is that exhibitors have access to the most diverse and influential buyers active in their sectors and those visitors have a huge network of gaming professionals covering every platform, discipline and environment to tap into. I can't think of any other event which delivers such a wealth of business opportunities for its visitors and exhibitors.