



Left: Four trade shows will be taking place during BETA in the NEC in February.

Right: Downtown Birmingham offers a variety of entertainment and restaurants.



Hitting the Trade Show Floor

When you hit the door at SPOGA, you'll immediately note one of the big differences between markets here and there. Retailers pay to get in the door. If you want a trade show directory, you pay for that, also.

When you burst through the door at BETA International, you'll immediately be caught up in a whirl of activity, lights and sounds. Since many of the 350 or so vendors only attend one trade show a year, they pull out all the stops.

Using lighting to attract attention is considerably more advanced in the United Kingdom than in the United States. It lends a Disneyesque flavor to the show.

Between shopping stops, you can enjoy the gala fashion show, view English saddles being made or take a seat and watch a live horse demonstration.

SPOGA isn't quite as bright and shiny as BETA, but the more than 300 vendors there come from a larger number of countries. SPOGA definitely has more of an international "street" feel, rather than a theme park, with representatives from China, India, Pakistan and probably about 40 other countries showing their wares.

If you're a nonsmoker, your first visit to either trade show will take you back about 15 years when smoking in public places was still permitted in the United States. Smoking is still allowed on the sales floor at both trade shows. If you have difficulties breathing second-hand smoke, you will want to plan to take regular breaks outside, although both markets do their best to keep the air moving.