

enormous booths. they are probably gone forever, but Dutch manufacturer Gispén made a splash with its mid-sized booth. The company opened its sole North American showroom in Toronto last year and sells some of its product in the U.S. through an agreement with KI.

Lounging at Gispén's Gold IDEX Innovation Award-winning Lounge workstation, company president Peter Veer asked and answered his own question.

"We think, from a functionality and design point of view, we do bring something different. I have not seen anything like our Lounge workstation, with its height-adjustable table, sliding tabletop, and walls that have an acoustic quality even without being filled with acoustic material. Then there are the little fun elements, like the wardrobe hooks at the back of the panels, that never cease to surprise Canadian visitors. We had a very successful first day, beyond our hopes."

Gispén sells about CDN\$130-million a year, putting them among the top 20 European office-furniture manufacturers.

Everything at the booth was Dutch-designed, notably by Richard Hutten and Maarten Baas, whose creations

repose in New York's Museum of Modern Art. Indeed, the 98-year-old firm still makes the Mondial chair, designed by Dutch architect Gerrit Rietveld and his son, Wim. The elder Rietveld is famous, or infamous, for his 1923 Red-Blue chair, woefully uncomfortable, utterly impractical, but strikingly sculptural.

Speaking of vintage furniture, The Bauhaus-ee 101 chair gives Marcel Breuer's Cesca chair a run for the money. However, "Our most iconic chair, the most sold chair, over the years, is the Gispén 412." This piece of Art Deco luxe looks like something that *Masterpiece Mystery's* set decorator would have filched to furnish Hercule Poirot's London flat.

tics of the room render audio quality and speech intelligibility very poor. Sound echoes off the windows and concrete and drywall. These are all sound-reflective surfaces. The standard solution is to lay acoustic tile on walls or ceiling, but, she says, "It's not at all gorgeous."

"Gorgeous," however, is just the word for Wobedo, the Swedish line of fanciful, colorful and decorative products for attenuating an overly reverberant room. IDEX saw her launch a new line, Dimensional Acoustic Panels. Its patented technology sculpts design into panel surfaces.

ACOUSTICS WITH DESIGN

According to Janine Gliener, marketing director at the new Canadian firm Acoustics with Design, "Acoustics is becoming a bigger and bigger issue in corporate office and facilities. It's a huge issue in meeting rooms, where people often put a speakerphone in the middle of the table, but the acous-



Detail of the humorous coat-hook accessory atop the frame of Gispén's Lounge workstation



Acoustics With Design booth and marketing director Janine Gliener

events

business
