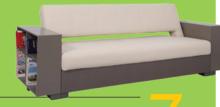


Former FDC winner heads own design company called MFivio.



There's more fabulous furniture at MIFF 2015! Here's a sneak peek..



Collection Nº 1

Philip Yap, MIFF and MTC collaborated on a showcase design



MIFF Update

From Bulgaria to Korea...MIFF 2015 welcomes new exhibitors.

or the third time in as many years, Muar Hall continues to be a huge attraction at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF).

Representing Malaysia's furniture city of Muar, the Muar Furniture Association (MFA) has been filling up Muar Hall with the region's products. Located at MATRADE Exhibition & Convention Centre (MECC), Muar Hall began as a strategic collaboration between MFA and MIFF in 2013.

"MFA was always looking for a bigger platform for our members to showcase their products to get more exposure to the global market," shared Desmond Tan Boon Hai, executive advisor of MFA.

The alliance with UBM to exhibit at MIFF every year, according to Mr. Tan, came about because of their mutual goal of increasing exposure and recognition of Malaysian furniture to the global market.

Muar may be a small city, but it is not called the 'furniture hub of Malaysia' for nothing.

Historically known as a royal city, Muar is about 2.5 times the size of Singapore.

Through the years, what used to be cottage industries and small factories have turned into industrial estates in Pagoh, Bukit Pasir, Bukit Bakri, Parit Jamil, Tanjong Agas and Gresik.

This has lead to the establishment of furniture manufacturing with essential support industries.

Now home to more than 700 furniture manufacturers, the city of Muar is responsible for almost 50% of the total furniture export of Malaysia, which represents billions of Malaysian Ringgit.

Hence, a visit to Muar Hall during MIFF 2015 is to experience the

remarkable transformation of Malaysia's

overall furniture industry at a glance. Since its humble beginnings in 1995, MIFF's significance in promoting global market access for Malaysian furniture has amplified seven-fold in terms of exhibitors with premium quality products from Muar alone making its mark in over 140 countries worldwide.

cont. >> page 2



MIFF FDC Judge Eiri Iwakura relaxes on the Infinity Lounge Chair competition entry.

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cover story cont. >>

In fact, big and small industry players ranging from manufacturers, traders and exporters to furniture finishing material businesses share the same aspirations – to reduce a single-region or market dependency.

Thus, Muar Furniture Association (MFA), which comprises over 450 members in its 33-year establishment, and MIFF with 500 exhibitors this year have created an exceptionally effective link into the global marketplace.

In recent years, the Malaysian government through the Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities has also earnestly pushed Malaysian furniture designs to greater height.

The result is obvious as Malaysia has successfully raked in a total of RM8.01 billion in 2014 from furniture exports with an increment of 8.9% from 2013.

According to the ministry, Malaysian furniture has contributed some 1.05% to its total exports globally.

With a turnover of US\$892 million recorded in MIFF 2014, MIFF 2015 strives to continuously provide its exhibitors and buyers with consistently great opportunities.











Buyers visit MIFF exhibits in years past





Former FDC Winner Heads Own Design Company

MIFF FDC 2014 first-prize winner Francis Lye talks about furniture design and heading

by Gloria D. Gamat Furnish Now editor

Since bagging the Malaysian International Furniture Fair's Furniture Design Competition (FDC) grand prize in 2014, Francis Lye Aik Theng has been a busy guy.

Passionate about industrial design in general, Mr. Lye has been concentrating on furniture design in recent years.

"Thanks to MIFF for broadening my horizons in design," he shared. "Now I have a lot of on-going projects."

Topping the highlights of his design projects is Mfivio. Having worked with Choo Ghee Kien, director of Supreme Tropical Furniture (Malaysia), the prototype maker of Mr. Lye's winning piece at FDC 2014, the collaboration on Mfivio was born.

"We co-founded the Mfivio brand together, and Supreme Tropical Furniture is our contracted manufacturer," Mr. Lye explained.

Mfivio started with outdoor furniture for Europe markets. However, Mfivio, coined from the word amphibian, according to Mr. Lye, represents versatility and multi-functionality. Thus, they wanted to design furniture that can be used not just outdoors but also indoors, he noted. While its outdoor series is mainly targeted for the European market, Mfivio has focused its indoor series to the Asian market.

As producer and exporter of economical outdoor furniture, Supreme Tropical Furniture has witnessed tremendous increase in competition – especially on price – from other Asian countries such as China, Vietnam and Indonesia.

"We've been trying to stageup our products ever since,"

a pet project called Mfivio.



Francis Lye (left) collaborated with Choo Ghee Kien (right) to create Mfivio.



Mr. Choo said. "So, we founded Mfivio to come up with designed mid-range living furniture. We see that there is a market for designed living furniture which are affordable to the majority of people, especially the younger generation."

Showcasing its products and latest designs at MIFF 2015 (booth 4A22, PWTC Hall 4A), Mfivio may have its own catalogue of designs but it is also open to design collaboration with potential buyers. In the last 6 months, the company's designs

are attracting huge interests from potential clients as far as Canada, Switzerland, Germany and Japan.

What makes Mfivio truly unique is the fact that it only utilises materials that are locally sourced. "Our mission is to promote Malaysian timber to international buyers," said Mr. Lye.

Red balau, a premium hardwood abundant in Malaysia is famous internationally. A strong timber even under harsh weather conditions, red balau makes longer lasting living furniture. At Mfivio, design concepts utilise the fusion of Malaysian timber such as the red balau and stainless steel, among others.

Indeed, Mr. Lye is having the time of his life doing what he loves most: designing furniture and working for his own company – an opportunity that wouldn't have opened for him without his involvement at MIFF FDC.

For FDC 2015, MIFF has partnered with the Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) and has set wood as the main material for the competition entries. "We hope that this will enhance awareness among the younger generation of designers on the eco-friendliness, versatility and beauty of wood — a material that has helped propel the Malaysian furniture industry," said Mr. Lye.

FDC offers the perfect platform for young designers to showcase innovative talents, according to Mr. Lye, and it also provides young designers with invaluable exposure to the industry and key insights from the experts in the field, he noted.

Further, Mr. Lye emphasised how young designers can learn more from working with smalland medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

"Young designers can really learn more from SMEs having a culture of working together and creating together," he pointed out. It is clearly the company culture that he and Mr. Choo are building at Mfivio.

"However, to succeed in design is not always having that 'wow' factor," Mr. Lye added. "It is not just aesthetic, but also the functionality. Most importantly, the feasibility of mass producing the furniture and selling it."

Mr. Choo evidently is in full support of Mr. Lye's aspirations, adding: "Besides bringing in income, we wish to bring the Mfivio brand outside of Malaysia and be recognised as a reliable designed furniture brand. We will continue our hard work to make surprises for end users."





It's all about *fabulous furniture* at *MIFF 2015*. Check out some of the stand-out pieces...



A Touch of Dining Elegance

Gather and dine in style with AHF 1501 by Acacia Home. This contemporary piece displays a perfect blend of modern style and outstanding appearance. Enriched with wire brush and add-on colour effects, this creative masterpiece is sure to re-invent your dining experience.

Acacia Home Furnishings Booth 148, PWTC Hall 1 www.acaciahome.com.my

Unlock the Leisure in your Chair

This colourful leisure chair covered by polyurethane fabric has a sponge-filled seat and back rest for that super comfortable appeal. Excellent quality chrome finish coupled with tangy red brings a cheerful and modern look to your seating space.

Anji Shuntai Furniture Factory Booth IM62, PWTC Hall 1M www.stchair.com

Knock-down Innovation

These fashionable newly launched sofa sets with knock-down (KD) system from Awana Sofa are targeted to minimise freight costs. This durable and elegant sofa set with a strong frame designed for maximum comfort lends an enigmatic appeal to your home furnishings.





The Bed That Has It All

This versatile Up and Down CTB 101 bed is a unique combination of flavourful style and functional storage. Aimed to offer you with the best utilisation of space, this soothing white bed with built-in storage has been manufactured skillfully. Stylish, sturdy and convenient – what more could you ask for?

BSL Furniture
Booth A17, MECC Hall A
www.bslfurniture.com



Create the Bedroom of Your Dreams

Transform your bedroom with this classy set to create a rich style statement. The clean-line design will surely amplify the warmth in your bedroom. The subtle graceful style offers a great start to creating the bedroom of your dreams.



BS Furniture Industries Booth A18, MECC Hall A www.bsfurniture.com



Go Bungee Sitting!

This unique and comfortable bungee chair offers you incredible flexibility and support to combat the discomfort of long sitting hours in the office. The flat band design conforms to your body to evenly distribute weight. The pneumatic lift and 360-degree swivel enables easy adjustment, just the way you would like it.

Chia Chi Ya Enterprise
Booth 4C16, PWTC Hall 4C
www.jgrchair.com















Living Room: Modern Edition

ugo, the ultra-modern sofa bed, combines modern design with a unique touch of synthetic rattan. Made of waterproof fabric, it offers a longer-lasting solution for the needs of every family. The beautiful built-in book shelves on the side and the cushioned back offer an optimum combination of utility and comfort.

> CV Beta Foam Industrial Booth 4B20, PWTC Hall 4B www.betafoam.co.id

The Fun Behind Your Meetings

fter a long event or meeting, chilling After a long event or a long at the out at a fun pop-up zone at the back balances the working atmosphere. Meet SIARRA – a multi-functional space divider that redefines meeting areas and invites more interactions at the back of a room.

Oasis Furniture Industries Booth 2B23, PWTC Hall 2B www.oasis.com.my

Reclaimed Boatwood Turned Furniture

he spectacular Usang collection from Black Robin comes from the magical lands of Java and Indonesia to offer unmatched charm to your room. If you are looking to add a zing of freshness to your decor, Usang is just perfect for you.

Black Robin Booth A16, MECC Hall A



Bedroom Designed by Nature

De charmed by the natural bedroom collection series that is sure to lend an **B**outstanding appeal to your home. Match the nature-inspired designer bed with division shelves, multi-purpose stool, and side table to complete that organic look.



Elegantly Graceful

The elegantly designed Firenze dining set with a smooth silhouette will steal your heart. The beautiful ash veneers merge naturally with the fabric material. Refined and elegant, Firenze is just what your dining space needs.

Deesse Furniture Booth D04, MECC Hall D www.deesse.com.my



Living Larger Than Life

R enoir from Fella Design is all set to lend grandeur to your living room. With graceful and comfortable features of this sofa, we promise that your favourite seating spot will never be the same again!

Fella Design

Booth C08, MECC Hall C www.fella.com.my



















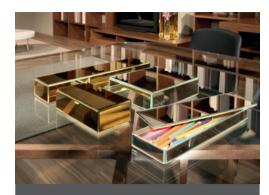




Modern, European-like Dining

Ade up of European Beechwood, this trendy design can be a stylish and graceful addition to your dining decor. The classic frame comes with an impressive mix of inner and outer modernity that is perfectly suited for contemporary homes.

IMEI Furniture Industries
Booth 137, PWTC Hall 1
www.imeifurniture.com



Glass Magic for that Artistic Appeal

Antique Mirror delivers magic through decorative accents in colourful designs. The markings and opacities in these decorative items further adds a fascinating and mysterious appeal to interior decoration.

Antique Mirror SRL Booth 4B31B, PWTC Hall 4B www.antiquemirror.it

Bring Luxury Home with Chesterfield

The Cambridge Highback from Satu Niaga provides a comfortable way to unwind. The high back feature offers greater head and neck support, enabling perfect relaxation. This Chesterfield sofa, with its unmatched graceful style, is a unique way to bring home the magnificence that truly reflects your lifestyle.

Satu Niaga Enterprise (CHESTERFIELD)



Wow at Work

With exquisite details and a sturdy frame, RX2 is a valuable piece in your office. In addition to excellent back support it offers, the posture friendly cushions and gears help you adjust the height and tilt. This curvaceous chair with vibrant hues definitely lends that 'wow' look to your work space!

Offian Co. Ltd.Booth 2C17A, PWTC Hall 2C www.offian.com

Bask in Antiquity

Exclusivity. Exquisiteness. These words perfectly describe this handmade chair that will instantly amaze you. Crafted with perfection, this graceful piece will bring a sense of antiquity and harmony to your home.

Usta Darin Ltd.Booth 4B30, PWTC Hall 4B www.ustadarin.com







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Be more than a **Designer**



Making relevant, sellable furniture goes beyond good design. As the brains behind the collaboration between the Malaysian Timber Council and MIFF - "Designing with Malaysian Hardwood" - internationally acclaimed Malaysian designer Philip Yap demonstrates through his $N^{\circ}1$ collection how you can combine research, good design and available resources to create designs that have aesthetic and commercial appeal.



Furniture makers MUST think about statistics, technology, and research what's marketable. For the N° 1 collection, Philip Yap drew upon one of the top four furniture styles today: Scandinavian mid-century -

which is rich in culture and history.



The collection uses a combination of rubberwood and Sepetir, a Malaysia-found hardwood. Good designs further elevate the value of the collection so the timber is no longer the sole factor promoting this collection. "We have our resources right under our doorsteps," he said. By rendering it with good designs, we can position ourselves to a higher budget market. In return, better margins give us a buffer to nurture good designers."

Designing furniture is not a singular venture. "You must assemble various disciplines to achieve the desired results," he said. "What I want to show on stage is the effort of collaboration. We have to look beyond the collection."



For this collection, Mr. Yap plays with interesting shapes, details and fabrics, such as this colourful striped material, which gives a modern twist to the otherwise retro design. "Furniture is like fashion," he said. "The fabric that we use reflects the style and taste today."



Why Scandinavian? A furniture designer must pay attention to consumer needs. The Scandinavian style appeals strongly to the younger generation, who love its simplicity, elegant proportions and timelessness. "You must research, research, and research before you can find a direction or purpose for design," he said.





A graphic designer by training, Kuala Lumpur-born Philip Yap's foray into the furniture industry began when he was asked by leading Malaysian furniture manufacturers to provide creative direction for their advertising campaigns. Since 2004, he has been operating successfully out of China, scooping up prestigious awards including the 2012 Top Ten Excellent Furniture Design Firm by the China National Furniture Association and the 2011 Top Ten Design Contributor by the Guangdong Furniture Association. Mr. Yap is a visiting professor at the Beijing-based China Academy of Art, one of China's renowned design-based institutions.

Mr. Yap can be contacted through philwkyap@yahoo.com.



MIFF Continues to Attract New Exhibitors

From Bulgaria to Korea and Malaysia, MIFF first-timers are seeking new business opportunities...

by Gloria D. Gamat Furnish Now editor

he Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) 2015 will host 500 exhibitors from 15 countries and regions and they are becoming increasingly interesting and diverse.

Having a track record of attendees from 141 countries, MIFF in its 21st year will feature exhibitors from China, Taiwan, Bulgaria, Korea, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Spain, the United States, Singapore, Italy, France, Japan, Turkey, Finland, India and of course Malaysia

This year, an overwhelming number of new exhibitors have joined MIFF: from Bulgaria to Korea and Malaysia. First-timers are raring for exposure into the global furniture market through MIFF.

Fascinated by Malaysia's culture and history, as well as MIFF's reputation as a top-notch furniture fair in Southeast Asia, Usta Darin Ltd. (Bulgaria) is exhibiting at the show this year.

"We were always fascinated by Malaysia and MIFF," shared Darin Kolev Bozhkov, owner, Usta Darin Ltd. "We are very impressed by the history of this country and by the coexistence of cultural traditions and modern technologies."

The brand Usta Darin, according to Mr. Bozhkov, represents the biggest woodcarving atelier in Bulgaria, from a town with very old traditions in wood-carving, architecture and famous art schools.

"MIFF is going to bring us new contacts in the global furniture market," said Mr.

By coming to Malaysia, Usta Darin is bringing the beauty and harmony of its furniture products from Bulgaria and showcasing them for the first time at MIFF.





IMEI Furniture Industries (Malaysia)



Black Robin (Malaysia)





"Meeting new people in this new market will open doors for new projects and great opportunities for us," Mr. Bozhkov added.

Antique Mirror (Italy)

Always looking for new exhibition opportunities in other parts of the world, Antique Mirror (Italy) also exhibits for the first time at MIFF 2015.

Makers of unique and artistic mirrors, Antique Mirror has been in the flat glass industry for more than 30 years.

All of the company's sheets and mosaics are produced in its factory in Sovicille (Siena) using patented procedures and artisan techniques.

Bringing its showcase of products to MIFF, Massimo Borgna, general manager, said: "MIFF represents for us a new challenge. This market, for sure, would appreciate our products."

Selling 80% of its products mostly in the United States, the United Kingdom

and Northern European countries, Antique Mirror, according to Mr. Borgna, strongly hopes that MIFF will bring new opportunities to its business.

Makers of office chairs and school furniture in Korea, Offian Co. Ltd. also is joining MIFF 2015 for the first time. With products already marketed worldwide, the company is seeking further worldwide exposure and partnerships through MIFF.

"The strongest point that attracted us to exhibiting at MIFF is the opportunity to easily find the right partners and dealers from Africa, the Middle East and around Asia," explained Sooil Yun, marketing director, Offian Co. Ltd. (Korea).

By displaying bestselling unique office chairs at MIFF, Offian Co. Ltd. is looking forward to closing more sales on site.

"Our target is to sell 13 x 40' HQ containers on site to different countries." said Sooil Yun.

Burgeoning furniture companies around Malaysia have joined the MIFF bandwagon this year as well.

Veteran wood furniture manufacturer, IMEI Furniture Industries (Malaysia) is bringing new products made of European beechwood to MIFF 2015.

"We have chosen to exhibit at MIFF largely due to it is internationally recognized reputation and strategic show location," shared Alvin Liew, export manager of IMEI Furniture Industries.

Satu Niaga Enterprise (Malaysia) exclusively exports the Chesterfield sofa (a leather sofa popular in Europe) to more than 10 countries worldwide.

This year at MIFF, the company will showcase Chesterfield and supporting accessories and materials.

"MIFF is one of the biggest furniture industry trade shows; we don't want to miss the opportunity of joining this event, in order to expose our company to the global market," said Suzool Fadli, director, Satu Niaga Enterprise (Malaysia).

Makers of the famous reclaimed boatwood furniture in Malaysia, Black Robin, also is seeking new global business opportunities at MIFF 2015.

"We aim to reach out to the international market and show them what we have to offer," shared Yuva Kuthayan, business development manager, Black Robin (Malaysia).

Reclaimed boatwood furniture can be a trend setter to the furniture industry, according to Mr. Kuthayan. "We look forward to creating new networks at MIFF and showing them the type of furniture we manufacture," he said.

Aiming to expand its international market in 2015, Black Robin is confident that promoting products at MIFF will make this goal achievable.



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