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DECEMBER 2011

The official magazine of the
Malaysian International Furniture Fair

Getting **REAL** about **Green** Furniture

In supporting the green movement, Malaysian furniture execs explain why they're **NOT** acting superficially like **THIS GUY**



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DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONT LINES OF THE GREEN FIGHT

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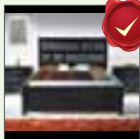
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The latest MIFF updates

ASHLEY FURNITURE HOMESTORE in Springfield, Illinois, recently realized its beautiful showroom was requiring dumpsters filled to the brim with packaging waste.

The store soon went green, reducing trash by up to 80% by baling and recycling it, reported *The State Journal-Register*.

In England, former Manchester United football captain Gary Neville recently opened an eco-friendly office development, according to the *Yorkshire Post*.

Mr. Neville is having an eco-home built as well, so clearly, celebrities are pushing the green envelope more than ever.

And in Canada, *The Globe and Mail* reports that Knoll's Toronto furniture showroom is using natural light to illuminate its 19th century industrial space, lessening the need for artificial lighting. Recycled materials also are prevalent—even in carpeting. The wall paint has organic compounds also, reducing toxins emitted into the air.

By the way, Knoll has fairly green products too, as it has cut down on chemicals in the goods it sells.

At the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF), we get the hint. It's a new furniture world full of concerns for our surroundings, and we look forward to lending a helping hand.

As this issue's cover story suggests, many MIFF exhibitors are embarking on innovative ways to make their products sustainable, recyclable and environmentally friendly. These vendors aren't paying lip service to what is becoming a green era in furniture. They're pioneers in their own right.

Many furniture vendors in Malaysia and globally still need to examine their own practices, from manufacturing to end usage, and we hope both our tales and our 2012 show are helpful in keeping thoughts brewing on this important topic.

Of course, we have many more stories to tell in this *Furnish Now* December issue, from expatriates enjoying Malaysian furnishings to where to find a nice pocket of local shopping culture near MIFF 2012 venues. We'll also showcase some Malaysian furniture placed in hotels around the world and keep you updated on important MIFF designer, exhibitor and manufacturer awards.

Happy reading!
Best Wishes,

DATO' DR. TAN CHIN HUAT
MANAGING DIRECTOR, MALAYSIAN INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR (MIFF)
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The official magazine of the Malaysian International Furniture Fair

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Welcome to Hotel Malaysia

By Khaw Chia Hui
Furnish Now writer



*Hume Furniture at the
Millennium Broadway Hotel Times Square*

THE NEXT TIME you visit or stay in a hotel anywhere in the world, there's a good chance you'll be sitting or sleeping on a piece of Malaysian-made furniture.

Aside from shipping furniture to various markets around the globe, Hume Furniture Industries Sdn Bhd is involved in outfitting hotels. Hotel projects are one of the company's main segments including serving as an ODM (original design manufacturer) and OEM (original equipment manufacturer).

So far, Hume Furniture has fitted Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel Chicago, The Royal Horseguards Hotel in London, and Andaz Wall Street (a Hyatt hotel in New York) among others. Hume Furniture recently completed Hyatt Regency New Orleans (with 1,183 guestrooms), Maxims Tower in Manila, as well as Malaysia's own Maxims Genting. Company projects also include Thistle hotels in London.

Hume Furniture ventured into this segment of the furniture industry in 2005



*Hume Furniture at the
Millennium Bostonian Hotel Boston*

and used trade exhibitions and agents to procure hotel projects. The company has also fostered close relationships with interior designers, hotel owners and architects.

Although most hotel projects come with designated designers, Hume Furniture helps clients on how best to utilise a certain space. As for working with designers, the company supplies loose, built-in furniture and interior fit-out. On some projects, Hume Furniture was required to propose designs to hotel owners.

Despite being involved in numerous hotel projects, the company feels that there



are no set trends as needs vary from hotel to hotel. However, common features in furnishings Hume Furniture provides are high gloss and contemporary designs. The company also reckons that hotels opt for Hume Furniture products because of good quality and working experience in this segment.

Continued on page 06

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Hume



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THE FURNITURE INDUSTRY can be secretive at times, and perhaps with good reason. Furnish Now editors have heard stories of cameras clicking past showcases in the hopes of copying, irate executives confronting alleged copiers in nonviolent but determined ways, and furniture company websites displaying old designs or none at all in the hopes of eluding creative bandits.

Hence, more often than not, many sources request anonymity, refrain from sending us good pictures, decline interviews, or delay them until deadlines have passed.

Now, even our investigative reporter, super sleuth Susie Smith, is requesting anonymity. Her name has been changed “so she can remain super,” according to Ms. Smith.

It’s a case-in-point about how all this anonymous silliness can get, but until we get more sources willing to speak on the record and send us pictures, we’ll have to keep citing all the Deep Throats of the furniture industry. And some of us are prepared to remain anonymous too. Take that, ha!

Here’s a sample of Ms. Smith’s recent sensitive questions, prompting authorized leaks.

How often do people actually buy furniture?

One respondent said people who “bought at need” fell mainly into two categories: those who were moving in, and those who

were moving up. “In” referred to those setting up home for the first time, while those in the “up” category are usually upwardly mobile—they’ve got better jobs and higher disposable income. Rule of thumb for furniture buying: it happens once every three or four years. It’s rare that people change furniture more often.

Has the global financial crisis changed the way the furniture industry works?

Yes and no. Many retailers experienced an abrupt dip in sales initially, but things got better as financial rescue packages and good, old-fashioned common sense kicked in. Let’s face it: the furniture industry has always been challenging; it has weathered some pretty rough times but has lived to tell the tale. As the saying goes, ‘What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.’ One retailer has agilely adapted her business model. She does more business with fewer customers. This enables her to provide better customer service, and manage inventory a lot better.

What was your first impression of MIFF?

“At first I thought there were a lot of repetitive designs, but the more booths I visited, the more I became convinced that the range available was really staggering,” one respondent said. “MIFF really has something for everyone, regardless of whether your market is contemporary, conservative, classic, traditional, or totally avant-garde. Also, the show emphasizes a wider selection of manufacturers, and

they’re getting better all the time, turning out better-designed, higher-quality products.”

How does MIFF differ from other shows you have attended?

“Firstly, it’s big—so the variety is truly mind-boggling,” said the respondent. “But there’s more to it than just the furniture. There are real opportunities to develop strong business relationships with manufacturers all over the world. In fact, I think I have developed more long-term business relationships from MIFF than I have from other fairs. There are also industrial insights at MIFF talks. It’s important to know what is happening in other countries, and there’s nothing like getting firsthand information from the experts at this fair.”

What’s your on your wish list for the furniture industry?

“I buy for many wholesalers, and in many categories—living, dining, bedrooms, children’s furniture, office, even public seating in some cases; tastes are constantly changing,” one buyer said. “It would be good to see more manufacturers attending MIFF. The fair has an excellent core of good quality producers and exhibitors, but I always look forward to seeing something new, or something old with a twist, when I visit. It’s true that there’s only so much you can do with a Windsor chair, but it’s always refreshing to see what innovation and creativity can produce—especially when we’re talking about furniture!”



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THAT'S THE SPIRIT

By Khaw Chia Hui
Furnish Now writer

Malaysian exporter shares something about his workday, his character, and why year-in-and-year-out, he's really into furniture

Although Malaysia's furniture export market is a competitive one, people behind the scenes are just that—people.

They're early risers. Many are passionate about design. And they listen, and willingly share the knowledge they have.

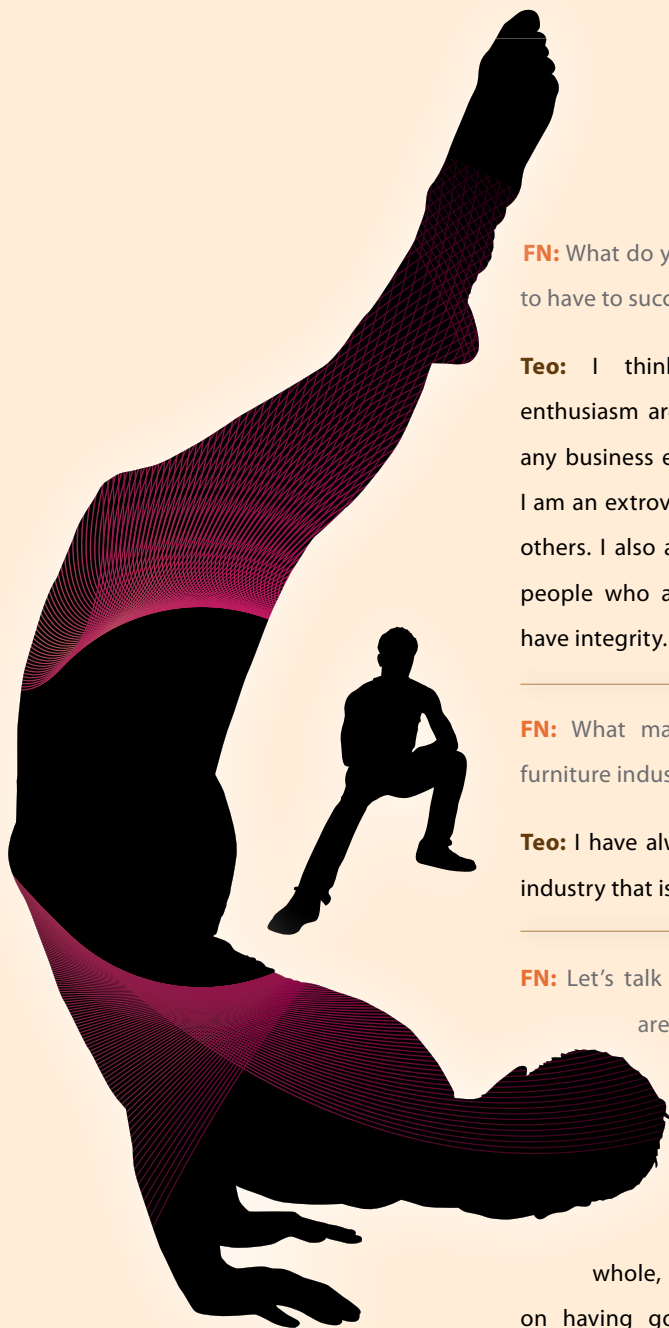
Tim Teo exemplifies the good spirit of Malaysian exporters.

As head of export for Batu Pahat-based Kuek Brothers Furniture Sdn Bhd, Mr. Teo recently shared some views on what it takes to succeed, and how far his company has progressed since it began manufacturing home furniture in the late 70s.

Tim Teo



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FN: What do you think are the right traits to have to succeed in this job?

Teo: I think that confidence and enthusiasm are positive traits to have in any business environment. As for myself, I am an extrovert who interacts well with others. I also admire and work best with people who are of good character and have integrity.

FN: What made you venture into the furniture industry?

Teo: I have always wanted to work in an industry that is design-oriented.

FN: Let's talk about the company. What are your key selling points?

Teo: We always give emphasis on the design and high quality finishing of our products. As a whole, the company prides itself on having good relationships with its clients. We listen attentively to them, and follow up on leads and enquiries in order to expand the markets we are in.

FN: Where are your main markets?

Teo: We have been exporting to more than 45 countries in the Middle East, North and South America, Europe, Australia and Africa.

FN: What are the criteria for entering a new market?

Teo: Any country that has a young population base is a good place to start.

It provides a strong platform for us and its furniture industry has plenty of room to grow. Aside from that, you need to understand the business environment and of course take into account buyers' feedback. Strategic partnerships are also important; hence we work closely with buyers to provide the right products.

FN: What designs or trends are popular now?

Teo: It is hard to pinpoint any particular trend as it is different in every market. We never assume our customers are satisfied with our product designs so we do our best to follow up with them, and the feedback has provided valuable insight into the quality and characteristics of our products, especially when something hasn't gone right and you still have the opportunity to correct it on time. We often use the valuable insights during design and production meetings to help improve both the processes and products.



Tim Teo

FN: Having worked at the company for six years, what is a normal workday for you like?

Teo: As much as I could, I would have an hour of uninterrupted time in the early morning to plan my day. When I am in the office, I keep my door open to encourage my staff to communicate with me effectively. As I oversee the marketing, design, production planning and quality control, communication is vital. I love the constant feedback, energy and general activity in the office as well.

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A little bird told me: red, orange, yellow, blue and purple ARE OUT.

For furniture, GREEN is in— ENVIRONMENTALLY SPEAKING

Once upon a time in Malaysian furniture history, a story on sustainable furniture would have been a paragraph long.

In the last few years, the list of exhibitors touting green products has risen dramatically. At the 2011 Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF), every other exhibitor seemed to be brandishing an eco label, and one could conclude that the industry's green movement is coming of age.

But going green is easier said than done. Manufacturing green furniture involves substantially higher costs and more processes. Beyond boasting a suite of eco-friendly products, going green also is about responsible manufacturing practices encompassing raw material acquisition, selection, storage, manufacturing, end use and final disposal.

We take a leaf out of the green handbook of the following role models, who share their challenges, lessons learned and exciting green initiatives for the upcoming MIFF 2012.

By Alexandra Wong

An oasis of green thinking

As managing director of ergonomic chair specialist Oasis Furniture Industries Sdn Bhd, Ralph Ong had been thinking green for

years, but began making real progress three years ago when he organized a massive campaign to integrate sustainability into company culture.

"For an initiative of this importance and scale, support must come from the ground level, right down to the staff who do the laborious selection, sorting and segregating of non-green from green raw materials," Mr. Ong said. "We showed videos about environmental challenges like weather changes, and about shortage of materials from flooding and deforestation to drive home the point about what would happen if we did not adapt and change.

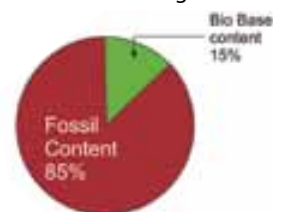


The Sorrento chair is composed, in part, of recycled bottles and shoes

"Environmental consciousness also is a topic in our corporate training for new staff," he revealed proudly. "Now, my team is fully on-board with our go-green efforts. We practise the 3R mantra (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) factory-wide."

Right now, Oasis is actively using materials from recycled waste products. As a standard in Oasis products, fabrics are partially or wholly made from polyester yarn recycled from PET bottles or textile waste from shoe factories in Asia.

Over time, the company aims to become greener in its output. One key initiative is developing materials that can reduce dependency on environmentally harmful raw materials. An exciting breakthrough is the bio-based memory foam (BVE) constituted from palm oil, which already has been commercialized. Fifteen percent of Oasis' well-received ergonomic chair Sorrento, which will be on display at MIFF 2012, is made of BVE.



"Since Malaysia is rich in palm oil, we thought that leveraging on green materials that already exist in our backyards would reduce transport carbon emissions," Mr. Ong said.

Another green product MIFF 2012 visitors can look forward to is RELUXE, an upgrade from a previous generation of revolutionary stackable chairs. Living up to its name—an amalgam of relax and

Continued on page 15



deluxe—it features a backrest that can tilt back while sliding the seat forward simultaneously with optimal effort, so you can sit in a seminar for extended periods, minus the backache.

What differentiates the newly improved RELUXE from its predecessor is the large green component; metal legs that form the base are 94% recyclable, while the fabric cover is made from recycled materials.

Green products constitute an expanding but still modest percentage of Oasis' portfolio, so why the intense focus on its green products for MIFF?

"Going green involves changing mindsets—our own as well as our customers," Mr. Ong said. "While the trend is slowly changing, buyers still look at price first and in terms of price points, green products are still more expensive than conventional products. Hence, furniture players like us have a role to play in educating our customers and buyers. And the best way to do this is to unveil our best green products at international exhibitions like MIFF."

How to wear the greenest badge

With virtually everyone slapping on the green badge, the next question is, how much of these green claims are real?

Contract manufacturer Euro Chairs Manufacturer (M) Sdn Bhd believes that you cannot simply market a product as green without backing claims up.

That's why, from the myriad of certification standards that differ in focus, strengths and weaknesses, Euro Chairs has submitted its green products through the ultra-stringent Greenguard Certification Programme.



Melvin Chay, business development manager of international export, explained that the certification process requires products to undergo independent, scientific testing and ongoing monitoring of the chemical emissions process. Each certificate has to be re-audited every year.

As early as 2005, Euro saw bigger potential behind environmentally-friendly furniture, and had been implementing green practices across the board. These include driving behavioural change at the micro-level (like switching off air-conditioning at lunchtime) and introducing environmentally-friendly manufacturing practices (like using low-emission E0 particle boards for the company's acclaimed Lighthouse and Runway collections).



Euro's Explore office furniture

For a demand-driven contract manufacturer like Euro Chairs, these actions result in potentially thinner margins—a reality that Euro Chairs understands very well.

"Hence, at the development stage, we must decide already which ones are for the environmentally conscious markets and which can work for the price-sensitive segments," Mr. Chay said.

At the moment, it's the big multinationals that are driving growth for green products, but Mr. Chay believes demand will grow at least as fast as regulation requires.

In the United States, companies that qualify as having green buildings get tax rebates. But that's not all.

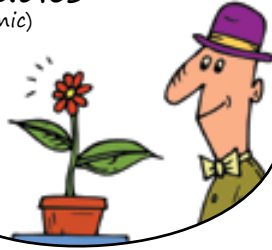
"In this age, a publicly listed company is assessed by its social responsibility image, so going green is one way to do it," Mr. Chay said. "As the green movement continues to gain traction, Euro Chairs wants to be in a good position to capitalize on this growth."



Euro's Headlines office seating

The Reusables
(a green comic)

Yes R, we do have that in R stock...



The R word

Leeza Yeo-Haas, Bristol Technologies Sdn Bhd's country director, predicts the next big green buzzword in furniture will be "Reusability."



"From our point of view, green furniture is not just about using materials from sustainable forests, low toxic material levels, or locally manufactured and durable pieces," Ms. Yeo-Haas said.

While Bristol is constantly experimenting with new materials—like those made from recycled PET bottles and waste—the company is aware that as product lines grow, creating a common bridge between them is crucial to adapt quickly to any future change.

Bristol's Artiv system is a prime example of the "Reusability" concept. Fully compliant with the Global Environmental Standard for Interior Fittings, Artiv's components are almost entirely reusable.

There's a die-cast aluminium component, made from 100% recycled material that also is 100% recyclable.



Bristol's Artiv system

There's steel, which is recyclable, and has the additional capability of not losing its inherent physical properties during the recycling process. That, by the way, drastically reduces energy and material requirements. There's also wood, which is renewable and has natural raw material.

The choice of powder-coated paint finish also lowers the emission levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) dramatically, while packaging materials—which consist of corrugated cardboard and polyethylene stretch wrap—form part of a closed-loop recycling system, meaning they can be recycled repeatedly. Palletizing also cuts down the volume of packaging material required.

Although a relatively late bloomer, the green furniture segment in Malaysia, which is said to have taken off in the last five years, is catching up fast.



Here, above left and above right: Bristol's green products in the workplace

"We have received, in an increasing rate over the past year, exponential requests for green furniture in Malaysia," Ms. Yeo-Haas said. "Heightened awareness is the key driver behind the demand for green furniture. Not only does having green furniture give you an edge over your competitors, everyone is aware that in whatever we do, we have an impact on the environment."



Dollars, cents and environmental sense

As green furniture emerges into the mainstream, there are bottom-line reasons for sustainability to be on every manufacturer's agenda.

Fortunately, good green business also is about making the world a better place.

"We're just trying to do the right thing," Mr. Ong said.

Thanks to growing green dollars, the right thing indeed can be done in Malaysia and beyond.



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*There's No Place Like a **Malaysian** Home*

*The 'HULST HILTON'
woos friends easily away from
the U.S., U.K. and Australia*

*By Matt Young
Furnish Now writer*



Continued on page 19

WHEN ROCHELLE HULST'S international friends visit her Malaysian home in Ledang Heights, Johor, they're stunned.

"They wouldn't have imagined a place this modern," said Mrs. Hulst, a 43-year-old Australian woman living in Malaysia for almost three years. "This is a great place to entertain, sit outside, have barbecues, parties, a pool, the garden...it's great."

In fact, international friends have become such frequent visitors to the home, Mrs. Hulst and her Dutch husband Geert, 46, have a new name for it: the Hulst Hilton.

"I had guests last weekend and guests next weekend," Mrs. Hulst said. "I had guests from the USA two weeks ago, will have guests from the UK in two weeks, and after that there will be guests from Australia."

Of course, those guests wouldn't keep coming in droves from across the globe if the Hulst Hilton didn't provide luxurious comfort.

And as it turns out, the very bed guests sleep on is Malaysian-made.

A perfect bed for the jetlagged



"I found the [bed] timber color I wanted to match the room as you see," Mrs. Hulst said. "And there have been a few jet-lagged 'customers' that have come through and they've been fine. There haven't been any complaints."

Racy red bar stools

Down the hall, Mrs. Hulst has a snazzy set of Malaysian-made bar stools too.

"I was looking for something to use for colour," Mrs. Hulst said. "And I just wanted a nice comfortable bar stool. I found these [locally] in Taman Molek and they've been good. They haven't rusted. They haven't fallen apart. And the kids haven't fallen off, so they're fairly stable."

The kids, 5-year-old Alex and 7-year-old Eloise, have been known to fight a bit and toss things about.

"Alex throws a tantrum and chucks something sometimes,"

Mrs. Hulst said.

"You wonder if something is going to get damaged. But the [Malaysian] quality is good. You look for a chip, but it lasts pretty well actually."

Rochelle Hulst



An eye for design

Indeed, the house is in fine shape. Mrs. Hulst paid attention to the finest details when the house, custom-made, was undergoing the construction and interior design phases.

"I know what I like," said Mrs. Hulst, an engineering draughtsman by trade. "I like to do the interiors especially. It's a hobby."

Her brother-in-law will have the interior of his own new house down the street designed by Mrs. Hulst as well.

"They said if I did something similar to what I've done here they would be happy," Mrs. Hulst said.

Impressed with the lifestyle, the number of expatriates has tripled in Mrs. Hulst's neighborhood since she moved there, and many are long-time friends.

"I have four friends who have bought in here just because of us," Mrs. Hulst said. "I have had two others contemplate it."

From its furnishings to the lifestyle within, the Hulst Hilton is a testament unlike any other to Malaysian style, quality, richness and global sensibility.



Photo credits: Hannah Nguyen

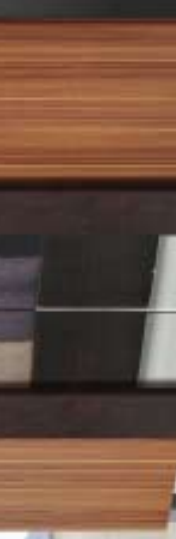
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Ms Anice Lai
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'Kayla' bed set, by Chinfon Furniture Industries;
chinfonfurniture.com; Booth 116



'A632' & 'BF011' & 'CTD012',
by BJ Cabinet Enterprise; bjcabinet.com;
Booth 115



'Easy Living ST 3938-00',
by Evergreen Fibreboard;
evergreengroup.com.my;
Booth 4B01



01



02

*“For you to **sleep well** at night, the aesthetic, the quality, has to be carried all the way through.”*

-Steve Jobs



03

01 'Ceni' sofa set,
by Hin Lim Furniture Manufacturer;
hinlim.com; Booth 216

02 '139W' bed, by BM Furniture Industries;
bmfurniture.com; Booth 213B

03 'LB2119-M Futon', by LB Furniture;
lbfurniture.com; Booth 213C

04 'Kingston Bed Set', by Decortage;
decortage.com; Booth 515

05 'T6' stool, by Euro Sun;
eurosunfurniture.com; Booth 322

06 'Cosmos' bedroom set,
by Seow Buck Sen Furniture;
seowexport.com.my; Booth 2C13



04



06



05



Continued on page 27



07



08



09



10



11

07 'Star Bunk' bed, by Tube Home;
tubehomefurniture.com; Booth 4A25

08 'Tonia' bed set, by Sin Heng Furniture Industries;
sinheng.com; Booth 2B20

09 'Explore' office furniture, by Euro Chairs;
eurochairs.com; Booth 2B03

10 'Jaya Solo 04', by Jemaramas Jaya;
versalink.com; Booth 2B01

11 'J series', by H D Furniture Industries;
purple-apple.com; Booth 2A10

12 'Hornbean 7' dining set, by Seng Yip Furniture;
syf.com.my; Booth 129



12



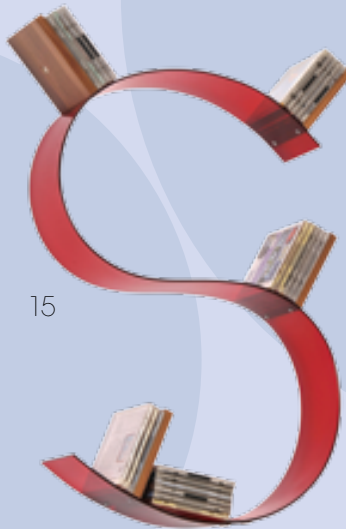
- 13. 'STW1082 Ardennes Dining Set',
by Shantawood Manufacturing;
shantawood.com.my; Booth 332
- 14 'Easy Living 1790-06',
by Evergreen Fibreboard;
evergreengroup.com.my; Booth 4B01
- 15 'GC1674 Wall Rack',
by Giant Choice; Booth 4C02
- 16 'New England' bedroom set,
by Hup Chong Furniture; Booth 4A06
- 17 'Stratus' sofa, by Fella Design;
fella.com.my; Booth B06, MECC
- 18 'Argos Tripple Bunk' bed,
by Southern Furniture;
tubeway.com.my; Booth 4A05
- 19 'Lowboard',
by Cheau Sheng Wood Products;
Booth 4C13
- 20 'Maicah' dining set,
by Golden Tech Furniture Industries;
goldentechfurniture.com; Booth 126
- 21 'Winchester Corner Dresser',
by G-Pacific Enterprise;
gpacificenterprise.com; Booth 121
- 22 'Erlyнна' bedroom set,
by Kinheng Furniture;
kinhengfurniture.com; Booth 4A26



13



14



15



16



Continued on page 29



17



“A house that does not have one warm, comfy chair in it is soulless.”

- May Sarton

18



19



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21



22





23

*“We are living in a world today where lemonade is made from artificial flavors and **furniture** polish is made from real lemons”*

-Alfred E. Neuman



25



24



26

23 'Yapi' chair, by Chueng Shine;
cschair.com.tw; Booth 4C07

24 'Classe Dark Cherry' desk,
by PT Timur Jaya Prestasi;
highpointoffice.com; Booth 2C11

25 'Ergo kids combination',
by TCT Nanotec; etct.com.tw; Booth 4C06

26 'Oscar' dining set, by Gamma Wood;
gammawood.com; Booth 123A

27 'Metal bedframe 02', by Leger Furniture;
Booth 4C03

28 'Kiezen' sofa, by Lanouva (Sin Lian Lee);
lanouva.com; Booth A03 MECC

29 'Pitovia' bedroom set, by Titov;
titov.com.my; Booth 313



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29



Continued on page 31



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34



- 30 PU chairs, by Spurs Industries; spurs.com.my; Booth 2B19
- 31 'Modesto Spirits Cabinet', by Reliable Trend; reliabletrend.com.my; Booth 229
- 32 'Mid back Office chair', by Chia Chi Ya Enterprise; jgr.com.tw; Booth 4C11
- 33 'MCA-DH3P', by Shuter Enterprise; shuter.com.tw; Booth 4C18
- 34 'XP Canopy Bedroom Set', by AFA Furniture; afaurniture.com; Booth 4B03
- 35 'Desk 1015', by Len Cheong Furniture; lcfurniture.com; Booth 333
- 36 'Hamra' set, by Powerhouse Industries; powerhousemalaysia.com; Booth 4B17
- 37 'Bridge desking', by Zenith Projects Technology; zenpro.com.my; Booth 2A23

33



32



30

31



Continued on page 32



38 'Flex Home Office',
by Decor Trend Industries;
decortrend.com; Booth 321



38

39 'Bedroom Set C',
by Gaoya Furniture Industries;
gy-furniture.com; Booth 2A15

40 'MH3040' & 'MH 73590(3660)',
by Mok Hin Furniture;
mokhin.com; Booth 221

41 'Futon Bed',
by Ken Yik Furniture Industry;
kenyik.com; Booth 4B10

42 'Twin Set open trundle',
by Poh Huat Furniture Industries;
pohhuat.com; Booth 320



39

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41



42



Continued on page 33



43



44

45

*“A table, a chair, a bowl of fruit and a violin;
what else does a man need to be happy?”*

-Albert Einstein



46



43 'Swissco' set, by YB Woodwork Industry;
ybfurniture.com; Booth 2B30

44 'SFD-421' chair, by Gauss Furniture;
gauss-chair.com; Booth 4C15

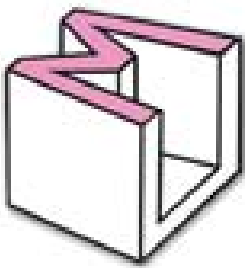
45 '2116(M)' & '2115(CT)' & '2117(DV)S110,
by ELK Furniture; elkfurniture.com.my; Booth 108

46 'Vinca Dining Set', by Aik Chee Furniture;
aikchee.com.my, Booth 335

47 'Bed 16-6075' & 'BST5019' &
'DTC636' & 'COD5912' & 'WR8004',
by VS Concept Furniture;
vsconceptfurniture.com; Booth 2A16

47





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Honing Design Skills in 2011: A Workshop Odyssey

By Li Shian Yeo
Furnish Now writer

THERE ARE FEW better ways to enhance your design skills other than to learn from and work with industry experts. And that was exactly what young Malaysian participants did recently in an exclusive half-day workshop in preparation for the 2012 Ideation Award competition.

Organised by MIFF Sdn Bhd and co-organised by ArcRadius Consulting Sdn Bhd, the workshop attracted more than 300 students from local colleges and universities. Lecturers, designers and representatives from local manufacturers also were present to gain insight into the art of furniture design and construction.

In opening remarks, Dato' Dr. Tan Chin Huat, the managing director of MIFF Sdn Bhd, said the Ideation Award will be the driving force to sustain the future of the Malaysian furniture industry. Malaysia, which has good reputation as a quality furniture maker—most notably in wooden products—can improve the industry by integrating good craftsmanship with innovative designs.

"For that, we need to tap the inventive spirit of young designers to come up with unique and distinctive furniture that can capture global attention—and one day, develop an identity for Malaysian-made furniture," said Dato' Tan.

Held in Kuala Lumpur, the event kicked off with a comprehensive tips-sharing session by renowned furniture industry expert, Ian Davies. The six-year Furniture Excellence Award chief judge enlightened the audience on how boring raw materials could be given a big twist to achieve highly functional and visually appealing pieces.

Emphasising the importance of utilising locally-sourced raw materials, he reminded young designers to give priority to Malaysia's wonderful solid wood, as fiberglass does not have the same character as solid timber.



Ian Davies



Aspiring furniture designers need to be empowered to embrace the real understanding of sustainability in designing their products.

"The problem in Malaysia is there's a lack of understanding on sustainability," said Mr. Davies, managing director of ArcRadius Consulting Sdn Bhd. "Going green in furniture designing doesn't just mean material but to adopt a total holistic approach."

Apart from designing tips, Mr. Davies also provided the participants with useful explanations on the Ideation Award submission requirements.

World-acclaimed furniture industry expert and researcher Dr. Jegathewasran Ratnasingam also advised young talents not to confine designs to only a few species of solid timber.

"Try to diversify your timber species," said Dr. Ratnasingam, an associate professor from the Faculty of Forestry of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

2011 Ideation Award winner and runner-ups—Bernadette Quah, Yong Chen Choong and Angie Ng—also were present to share their views on how the Ideation Award had prepared them for the furniture industry.

And the highlight of the day? The participants got excited as they were divided into groups to get a brief and fun hands-on

experience of furniture designing. Each group member worked together to produce a design and mini prototypes using various stationary-colour pencils, markers, cardboard and old newspapers.

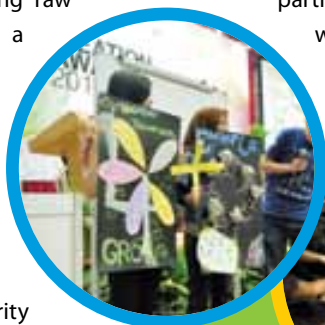
Hafeezur Rahman Mohd Yassin, a lecturer from the Product Design Department of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Penang, was among those present at the workshop with his 34-student entourage.

"The students were very excited about the trip because they are keen to explore the potential in the furniture design industry," said Mr. Hafeezur, who traveled four hours with his students and arrived just in time for the workshop. "Ideation Award is definitely an opportunity for students to express their idea and expand their talents."

Themed 'My Favourite Chair' in 2012, the Ideation Award is open to all Malaysians and foreign students below the age of 30 to inspire youths in furniture design. To enhance the competitiveness of the competition, the 2012 Ideation Award is also open to non-academic participants based in Malaysia.

Last year, the competition attracted more than 220 entries from design students of 13 educational institutions. The designs of the finalists will be transformed into prototypes to be judged by a panel of seven international and local judges.

"To date, we have received over 300 entries which, is obviously very encouraging," said Dato' Tan. "It surpasses our expectation. Next year, the total prize money has been increased to RM10,000 with RM5,000 going to the winner when the results are announced on March 8 during MIFF 2012."



Continued on page 36

WIN AN AWARD AT MIFF 2012



FURNITURE EXCELLENCE AWARD

A PART FROM Ideation Award, the other highlight at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) 2012 is the Furniture Excellence Award. The award was conceived to acknowledge furniture that offers outstanding qualities. Unlike the previous years where products were judged under six major categories including Children, Sofa and Outdoor, the 2012 Furniture Excellence Award will be divided into two key categories—Household and Office. Each entry will be evaluated based on creativity and originality of concept and design, sustainability of chosen materials and marketability of the products. The award indirectly aims to encourage designers and manufacturers to pay attention to the vital components that contribute to a phenomenal end result.

BEST PRESENTATION AWARD

THE BEST PRESENTATION AWARD is created to recognise exhibitors' effort in presenting the best visually appealing booths with good product presentations at the yearly Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF). Jointly organised by MIFF Sdn Bhd and the Malaysian Timber Council (MTC), winners are selected based on a few fundamental criteria: booth design and creativity, product presentation and staff's knowledge on the exhibited products. The award is divided into two categories: shell scheme booths and bare space booths.



'UNCONVENTIONAL CREATIVITY' FOUND AT IDEATION AWARD JUDGING

'Blunt feedback' also appreciated by young participants

By Li Shian Yeo
Furnish Now writer



(Left to Right) Pre-judging round determines cream of the Ideation crop

THERE WAS A hint of tension in the air as the spotlight focused upon 40 talented 2012 Ideation Award finalists during the second pre-judging round in Kuala Lumpur recently.

In a room packed with judges and select local manufacturers, finalists turned into suave presenters as they demonstrated various aspects of their designs. Each finalist was given five minutes to convince judges of the concepts behind their selected designs.

A panel of seven respected local and international judges from the industry watched with pens poised in mid-air, ready to capture credit and demerit points. The entries were judged based on aesthetic value, innovativeness, functionality and sustainability.

Themed 'My Favourite Chair', the finalists indeed convinced the judges with designs that showed great promise. From a coconut-inspired sofa, a double-functioning chair to a baby chair, the

judges felt that the overall entries were inspiring.

Although the ideas wowed them, the majority of designs left something to be desired in terms of material knowledge and cultural identity, judges found.

"The rawness is still there in the designs," said Desmond Lee, marketing director of KinHeng Furniture Sdn Bhd, who was one of the judges.

Another judge, Ee Poh Ching, founder of Singapore-based design studio Exit

Continued on page 37



(Anticlockwise) Jason Kua Poh Juan and his flora-inspired Apolusti Chair; Rudy Kwinoto with his wall painting-inspired chair; some Ideation design models; Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) students and their respective design models



during the final round at MIFF in 2012.

23-year-old Mohd. Sazli Mohd Daud, from Kelantan was delighted to be among the 18 lucky selected finalists. The Sarawak-based Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) undergraduate flew in from Kota Samarahan with his 30-inch tall design model, The Flip Chair (the largest model ever presented at pre-judging round).

"I am very happy that the judges like my design," said the design technology student. "And I can't wait to see the end result [prototype]."

For 19-year-old Jason Kua Poh Juan, his participation in the competition was merely to challenge his own creativity. His visually-appealing flora-inspired Apolusti Chair was among the judges' favourites, even though it was not selected for prototyping.

"But I appreciate their blunt feedback that my design is way too complicated and costly to be materialized...unless I could simplify its mechanism," said the interior design undergraduate.

In conjunction with the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) and co-organised by ArcRadius Consulting Sdn Bhd, the Ideation Award is currently held for the third consecutive year.

"The competition is most timely," said Tay Kim Huat, managing director of Poh Huat Furniture Industries (M) Sdn Bhd.

As the biggest furniture exporter in the country and the Diamond Sponsor for the 2012 Ideation Award, he expressed his worries over the slower advancement in local furniture design.

"Thus, we hope that through the challenge, more young talents are trained to think outside of the box and help to produce better quality designs for the industry," said Mr. Tay, who has more than 30 years of experience in the industry.

Design, spotted at least two designs that really stood out. One of the designs that captured his attention was the acrylic-inspired chair Cha'ble, designed by a multimedia student.

"His creativity is very unconventional," Mr. Ee said. "He incorporated his multimedia knowledge to create the visual impact in his design. And that is very impressive."

Some judges expressed concern over the lack of ergonomic factors in many designs.

This important factor should not be neglected as "consumers are very educated these days," said Klaus Kummer, a renowned

Thailand-based German designer.

"Rather than aesthetically-appealing innovations, we want to see more ergonomically-driven designs," added Mr. Kummer, who is also the president of a high-end design company, KDT International Co Ltd.

The 40 finalists who represented various design institutions in the country were selected out of 124 submitted entries. At the end of the whole-day pre-judging session, 18 designs were shortlisted. Selected designs were then paired with local leading manufacturers for 10 to be further developed and prototyped. The prototypes will be showcased and judged



Ideation Award judges and finalists

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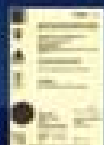
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A Piece of

Malaysiana

Central Market towers above the usual shopping suspects

By Khaw Chia Hui
Furnish Now writer

JUST LIKE MAJOR cities around the world, Kuala Lumpur is not short on shopping malls.

But there is one 123-year-old “mall” that’s really worth checking out as a facet of Malaysian culture.

Central Market, locally known as Pasar Seni, is a heritage building that houses vendors selling arts and handicrafts. In 1888, it was an open air wet market catering to the local community while the current building was completed in 1937. When the city was undergoing rapid development in the 70s, Central Market was planned to be demolished before the Malaysian Heritage Society stepped in. After massive renovations in the mid-80s, Central Market took on a vibrant look and began promoting Malaysian culture.

The main building has several lanes promoting Malay, Straits Chinese^{*1} and Indian wares, a nod to the three main races in the country. There also is a lane known as Lorong Kelapa^{*2} (Coconut Lane) that sells a wide variety of coconut-based desserts and tidbits. It is definitely a place for those with a sweet tooth.

Its upper floor is a mini batik hub. You can find batik clothes, shoes, bags

and home furnishings from well-known companies. Aside from batik—or fabric with traditional patterns—avid trinket collectors and bargain-hunters also can spend the day scouring antique and unique items from various stall and shops in and outside Central Market.

Right outside the main building is a covered walkway with huge *waus*^{*3} (a type of Malayan kite) shadowing rows of kiosks. One can find souvenirs, art and street food while on weekends you can find buskers. It also attracts avid photographers and people-watchers.

For those who love to walk around, there are plenty of heritage and old establishments such as Masjid Jamek, Sin Sze Ya temple and the Klang River to check out. At the information counter inside, you can register for the free Heritage Walk which starts at 10:30 am daily. The walk will take you into the nooks and corners of old Kuala Lumpur where the guide will point out interesting historical tidbits that a modern Malaysian might not even know.

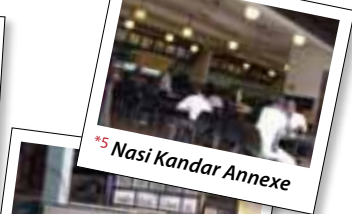
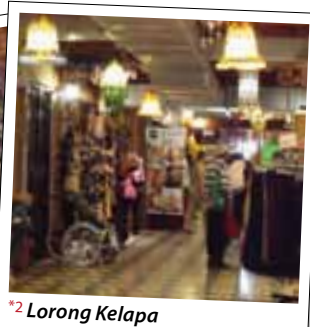
Another part of Central Market which is worth a visit (or two) is the Annexe Gallery^{*4}.

Located just behind the main building, the Annexe was converted from an old theatre into a three-storey art space. You can find shops selling various arts on the ground floor. The upper floors house art galleries, theatre and music performance spaces. It is open all-year-round and plays host to various local and international artists.

Lastly, food is an integral part of Malaysian culture. Just next to the Annexe Gallery is the Nasi Kandar Annexe^{*5}, which is a favourite haunt for nearby office workers. Experience Malay-Indian culture where you can have roti canai or nasi lemak for breakfast, dishes with rice for lunch/dinner and of course, a cup of sweet tea anytime of the day.

There also are eateries inside the main building such as Secret Recipe, Old Town Kopitiam, Kings Confectionery, Famous Amos, Precious Restaurant, Ginger Restaurant and more.

The best way to get there is by LRT train because traffic is heavy most part of the day. Although the main building and the Annexe Gallery is air-conditioned, the weather can get very warm in the afternoons, so dress appropriately. Entry to Central Market is free.



How to get there

From Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC): Take the LRT train at the PWTC station to Masjid Jamek (Ampang Line). Central Market is about a 10 minute walk from the Masjid Jamek station. Or instead of walking, change trains at Masjid Jamek station to Pasar Seni (Kelana Jaya Line). Central Market is just across from the Pasar Seni station.

From Matrade Exhibition & Convention Centre (MECC): It’s best to take a taxi.





CONGRATULATIONS, MIFF!



The editorial team of *Furnish Now* congratulates Dato' Dr. Tan Chin Huat, chairman and managing director of the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF), for MIFF's recent award:

Outstanding Malaysian Brand – Silver award from Star Outstanding Business Award (SOBA) 2011.

This is the latest award MIFF adds to its trophy collection, which includes:

- **Best MICE Exhibition of the Year** 2004/2005/2006 from the Malaysia's Ministry of Tourism;
- **Best Brands in Furniture Trade Exhibition** 2007 from The Brand Laureate;
- The 8th Asia Pacific **International Honesty Enterprise** from Keris Award 2009;
- The 9th Asia Pacific **International Entrepreneur Excellence** Brand Award 2010;
- **Corporate Partner Award** 2010 from Furniture Leadership Award;
- **Industry Excellence Award** 2011 from Malaysian Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers & Suppliers (MACEOS),
- **Outstanding Malaysian Brand** – Silver award from Star Outstanding Business Award (SOBA) 2011.

Once again, MIFF, congratulations on your outstanding performance!



Exceptional Value and Opportunities at MIFF 2012



SIGH NO MORE.

While some may worry about the current global economic outlook, at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF), nothing but encouraging opportunities await you.

"In the present challenging economic times, the fair will stand out for its exceptional value and excellent opportunities for furniture buyers," said Dato' Tan Chin Huat, Managing Director of MIFF Sdn Bhd. "MIFF has a long standing reputation as a robust trading place since we started in 1995."

MIFF takes place from March 6 to 10, 2012, in the Malaysian capital city of Kuala Lumpur.

At the 18th annual show, buyers can expect to browse through an exciting range of new products and designs from Malaysian and regional furniture makers. The business-to-business trade show seen as one of the top 10 furniture fairs in the world is expected to again draw 500 exhibitors and 20,000 trade visitors from 140 countries.

"Malaysian manufacturers, in particular, are attuned to global economic cycles and will respond nimbly," Dato' Tan added. "Over the years, our exhibitors and buyers have built excellent business ties and this has boosted the resilience and reputation of MIFF."



SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

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Best designed booth to encourage creative strategies to pull in the crowd, co-organised by MIFF Sdn Bhd and the Malaysian Timber Council

Furniture Excellence Award

Most creative furniture design to recognise product innovation and quality

Ideation Award 2012 – Themed "My Favourite Chair"

- Young design talent contest; 10 final prototypes to be displayed at MECC.
- Diamond Sponsor: Poh Huat Furniture Industries (M) Sdn Bhd

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Special daily edition to keep you posted with new designs, products and happenings during MIFF 2012

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Transport: Convenient and free non-stop shuttle bus between PWTC and MECC for trade visitors during show days

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Exhibition Space: 75,000 sq metres

No. of Exhibitors Anticipated: 500

No. of Visitors Anticipated: 20,000 from 140 countries

For more information, visit www.miff.com.my



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