

MALAYSIAN  
INTERNATIONAL



FURNITURE  
FAIR

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The official magazine of the  
Malaysian International Furniture Fair

OCTOBER  
2012

## Why is this **Malay** **Cooking Furniture?**

A) He's a chef, and he  
likes furniture (page 7)

B) International life  
sizzles with local  
furnishings (page 12)

C) Exports heat up with  
orders from one big  
place: America (page 5)

D) MIFF 2013 is fired up  
with 80% exhibit space  
booked (page 28)

E) All of the above





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# Malaysia, Truly International

Many exhibitions boast of being “international,” but the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) couldn’t be anything but that.

Just think. If we were MDFF (the Malaysian Domestic Furniture Fair) or MFF (Malaysian Furniture Fair), we’d be unpronounceable as an acronym. And those names wouldn’t be accurate either.

At MIFF 2013, 7,000 foreign visitors are expected from 140 countries.

Although we are thankful that MIFF has been hugely successful to drive this trend over the years, honestly, there’s a whole nation out there making this happen.

In this issue, we take a look around and notice why Malaysia is such an international furniture powerhouse.

We didn’t look only at furniture manufacturers here, but global-minded Malaysian citizens, residents and visitors who have some tie-in to the furniture world. All of us, collectively, are driving the nation toward a more thoughtful furnishing universe.

We talk to Dato’ Chef Ismail, a Malaysian with eclectic taste in furniture. Aside from being a celebrity chef, he demonstrates a keen sensibility in international décor. He’s one of many Malaysians that now have this global outlook and insight, thanks to a government that urges us toward being a completely developed nation by the year 2020.

We also talk to Ana Maria Munoz. Ms. Munoz, having been born in Australia to Colombian parents and raised in the United States, couldn’t get much more worldly. She now makes her photography and designs come alive in Kuala Lumpur with a special interest in finding a dream chair made of rattan.

There’s Zobida Mohammed, from Trinidad, who views Malaysia as more than just a furniture sourcing destination. She plays up the Malaysian aspect of furniture found there and differentiates her products from competitors that way.

Domestic furniture manufacturers, of course, are doing their part too. With the United States as a major destination of Malaysian furniture, locals have embraced American values in manufacturing and exporting practices.

So when you visit MIFF 2013, we’d like to be the first to welcome you to a whole new Malaysia. Come, and experience a global furniture village like no other.

Best Wishes,

DATO’ DR. TAN CHIN HUAT  
CHAIRMAN, MIFF



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## furnish now

The official magazine of the Malaysian International Furniture Fair

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Made for the U.S.A.



By Shantini Harriet  
Furnish Now writer

# GOD BLESS MALAYSIA, FURNITURE LAND THAT WE LOVE

## U.S. importers find their values are revered in Malaysia, and keep coming back

Despite the global economic downturn, the Malaysian furniture industry has been able to maintain a healthy and vibrant business relationship with the United States.

According to U.S.-based *Furniture Today* magazine, the U.S. retail furniture market size of US\$80 billion still makes it the largest furniture market in the world, despite having shrunken recently. Meanwhile, although exports to the U.S. from all countries dropped markedly beginning in 2009, one Malaysian furniture association reports an increase of about 10% in U.S. export sales of approximately RM899 million (US\$295 million) for the first five months of 2012 as compared to RM771 million (US\$253 million) in the same time period last year. That makes the United States the largest destination for Malaysian furniture today, and especially, wood-based furniture given the Asian nation's rich natural resources of rubberwood.

The U.S. anti-dumping tariffs on wood bedrooms from China has considerably

aided in demand for Malaysian wood furniture, which presented itself as a solution along with Vietnam's and Indonesia's, to the tariff problem for U.S. importers.

However, recent U.S.-led Malaysian export growth also may be a consequence of the U.S. values that Malaysian vendors cater to, especially during times of trouble.

With so many factories still targeting the U.S. market for opportunities, manufacturers have to be the best at what they do though not necessarily the cheapest. Price is always a factor but retailers in the U.S., where competition is rife, need products to be delivered on time with no mistakes. Manufacturers also need to be able to offer products with value that cannot be produced anywhere else in the world.

Kevin Castellani, President of Furniture Today Media Group, explained: "Today with a difficult economy, every importer has to be competitive on price, deliver a quality product on time that has value as well as

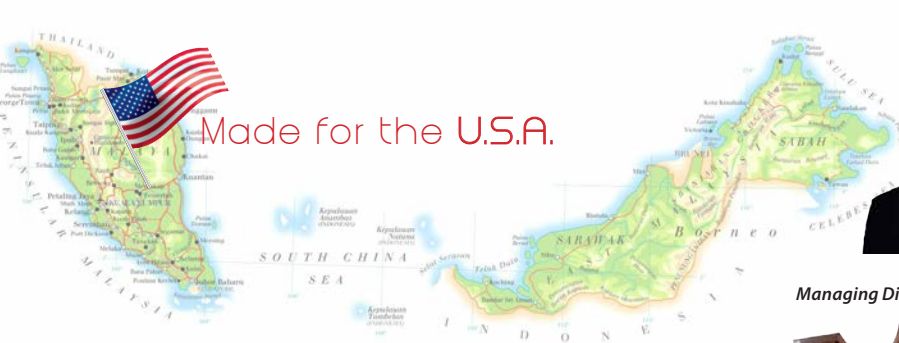
product difference. Trust and quality are always high on the list because today there is no room for error."

Malaysian manufacturers have a keen understanding not only of these values, but also the changing priority of American values.

Before the economic crisis, although price was important, design and quality were what were most valued. Post-crisis, with price gaining more importance, importers faced the dilemma that quality and design would become compromised in the process. Malaysian manufacturers were more than happy to oblige to assuage their fears.

Understanding export volumes would inadvertently get affected, many changed their business models slightly, without having to lose their existing clients by improvising where they could.

"We made the costing according to the price and the design to fit into it," said Kelvin Tey, Senior Manager of Aik Chee Furniture Sdn Bhd, a leading rubberwood



Made for the U.S.A.



Chong Soon Keat,  
Managing Director of Gamma Wood



Gamma Wood uses its professional knowledge to make products specific to U.S. importer tastes

*“Malaysian furniture exporters are better equipped to deal with American buyers because of their very competitive pricing, **strong trust** and raw materials”*  
- Kevin Castellani

dining sets manufacturer. “We didn’t change the design itself but played with the specifications instead like dimensions and size. We can’t do much where raw materials are concerned because they can’t be replaced with something cheaper. But we can do what we can to cut costing to make the product cheaper for the customer while the quality remains the same.”

He further iterated, “We also fixed the design to the U.S. market since their market depends on the current trends and make sure they get exactly what they want.”

Using the opportunities presented to them and understanding the need to cope with the current situation, Malaysian

manufacturers have taken the initiative to specialise and increase their professional knowledge.

Chong Soon Keat, Managing Director of Gamma Wood Sdn Bhd, based in Johor, the principal hub for Malaysian furniture manufacturers, acknowledges that being able to work around the price issue is a key component.

“Countries like China and Vietnam offer products cheaper so we have to specialise our designs, quality, service, concept and delivery because these are also very important to the U.S. buyers,” he said. “Pricing is important but it always has been. So our professional knowledge and capabilities to make products that are specific to [U.S. importers] makes them happy, knowing that nobody else has it.”

Continued Mr. Chong: “They never have to worry about the quality because they know that the actual product shipment sent to them is exactly the same as the sample we have shown, unlike some other places, because we are concerned with quality.”

In fact, trust, communication and dependability works both ways. Many of these factories have been in business with their customers for many years and instead of ‘abandoning a sinking ship’, most of them opted to carry on business as usual with the belief that their American partners eventually would persevere and stay with them in the long run.

Mr. Chong believes that the U.S. has remained strong despite the 2008

economic downturn.

“In 2008 when the economy was down, the U.S. was still strong,” he said. “The U.S. is stable and their economy is increasing. In fact, we even have new customers from the U.S. and an increase in orders. The Europe market is the one that is worrying, not the U.S., so we continue to focus on the U.S.”

He added: “We develop our skill knowledge, our factories are well equipped to meet any requirements and we don’t worry about quality and delivery because these are the things we have kept developing. The client is first priority so we only ask what we can do for them.”

According to Mr. Castellani, “Malaysian furniture exporters are better equipped to deal with American buyers because of their very competitive pricing, strong trust and raw materials. Malaysia also has an infrastructure set up which allows for an easy flow of goods.”

With the dollar strengthening, the U.S. market is seeing its economy improving as it enters in a recovery stage. However, there is a patriotic rallying call in the U.S. for Made in America furniture products.

Although there is support for Made in America, Mr. Castellani said most wood manufacturing factories in the U.S. have been shut down and not likely to come back online. And although upholstery has made a comeback in the U.S.—where the kits are made in other countries and assembled in the U.S.—imports of products from around the world will always be important. Furthermore, since retailers do not want to carry inventory, it will all be about speed to market, quality and trust. Concerning these values, American importers can rely on Malaysian exporters to deliver.



Aik Chee has tried to cut costs without using cheaper raw materials for its furniture



Roger Tee Seng Chee,  
CEO of Aik Chee Furniture

# *At Home with Malaysia's Favourite Celebrity Chef*



*Welcoming bright red doors.  
Warm, cosy interiors.  
Unique pieces that invite you  
for a closer look.  
Welcome to the home of  
Chef Dato' Ismail Ahmad.*

*By Angie Tan Siok Peng  
Furnish Now writer*



Here: Chef Ismail's bedroom

Below: Teacups at Restoran Rebung Chef Ismail

Page 09: Chef Ismail and his home

Somewhere within a high-rise condominium in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur, lies the retreat for one of Malaysia's favourite chefs—and you can't miss it.

It is the only unit with a red door.

A touch of exotic, a hint of vintage; this Bohemian sanctuary is where Chef Ismail calls home with his Persian cat, Taja.

Beyond the door, step in and be transported to a colourful and exotic wonderland. What really hits you first is the strong primary colour palette in play here—red, orange, yellow and blue. And of course, the furniture and décor! It might shock the more conventional creatures but the overall ambience is charming and friendly.

"Colours give me inspiration," said the affable Chef Ismail. "It is my way of living and furniture are part and parcel of my daily life. As a chef, my aim is to seat my customers in a friendly and homely ambience. People today want to feel at home, be comfortable and just have a break."

Red isn't everyone's comfort colour, but it is for Chef Ismail.

"It gives me a lot of energy!" he said. "I also like the rustic feel of furniture and that Bohemian flair."

His warm personality definitely is

reflected in his home. So vibrant and alive, it is brimming with rich treasures from around the world.

Hanging pretty from the ceiling at the entrance is a one-of-its-kind Chinese lantern adorned in crystals. Next, two huge orange artworks from Cape Town receive you in the living room. The sunny drawings depicting rows of ants dancing and playing music are clad in gold frames sourced from Italy. Now imagine all these set against a red feature wall!

*"Every piece of furniture I acquire has its own energy"*  
— Chef Ismail

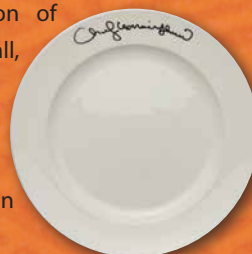
More paraphernalia dot the whole apartment. Oil lamps from Jaipur. A shelf filled with old encyclopaedia sits in the corner. Glass cabinets are filled with gold-plated English teacups, brass teapots, crystal bowls and a host of tableware, most of which are family heirlooms. There also is a collection of plates lining the wall, souvenirs from his travels and gifts from friends.

But perhaps even

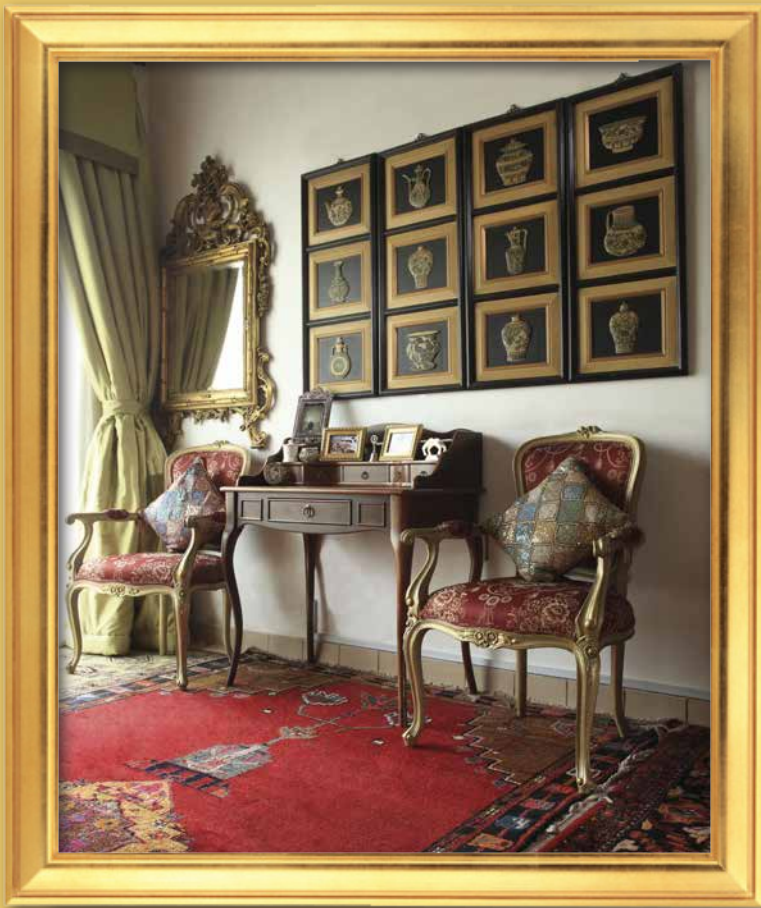


more precious than anything else is an 8' x 4' gold threaded tapestry. Once a part of his mother's wedding gift, he salvaged the curtains from his parents' four-poster bed and had it lovingly-framed.

Other pretty treasures are his chairs. With a penchant for all things antique and vintage, Chef Ismail loves collecting chairs. A pair of ornate French chairs sits beside an elegant writing bureau. Another small



All photos in the Cover Story by Dwayne Foong



German chair stands proudly just outside his bedroom. All are dressed with opulent throw pillows.

Luckily the cool, turquoise Laura Ashley armchair with matching stool offers a break from the bright pop of colours. The large made-in-Malaysia pinewood mirror offers the illusion of space and a little breather from his eclectic mix of possessions.

What of his kitchen? Well, at home, Chef Ismail prefers to take it easy. So the kitchen is small but cosy. However, it is not excluded from his fantastic design flair. Infused with red cabinets that cheer, he completed the look with a small distressed wooden table and chairs, and used gleaming brass kettles from the Middle East to accessorise.

When asked how he chooses his furniture, Chef Ismail said he goes with his gut instinct. Or love at first sight. He prefers hunting for great bargains rather than heading to expensive shopping districts. In fact, he found a great deal of good buys shopping at Sunday markets, wholesale outlets and antique shops in Frankfurt and Cannes.

"When I buy furniture abroad, I only

*"I believe that everything starts from your home, where you rest and unwind"*  
– Chef Ismail

fitting that his home today reflects the happy times from his childhood. Of course, for one who loves his roots, he is also working on his villa (just next to his family home) in Kampung Chengkara Ulu, Kota Rembau, Negeri Sembilan.

"To me, my home is very important," Chef Ismail said. "The right furniture is important. People now pay expensive money to de-stress at a spa. Why can't you just relax at home? I believe that everything starts from your home, where you rest and unwind."

You'd be surprised to know that when Chef Ismail is tired or feeling stressed out, his medication is home and interior magazines! His personal assistant and staff know to grab the latest copy of Home & Garden for him when he is feeling down.

"I transport myself into these beautiful homes in the magazines," Chef Ismail said. "It takes me away from all the stress."

For Chef Ismail, his home feeds his soul, and nourishes and revives his spirit. Into Restoran Rebung he then goes, revealing himself to Malaysia and the world through tasty food and tasteful ambiance.

fix them up when I get home," he said. "For example, that chair from Germany, the legs were wobbly but I checked it in anyway at the airport and had it restored here."

In Cannes he found three similar exquisite gilded mirror frames. He brought them back and installed new mirrors. Now one sits at home and the other two in his restaurant, Restoran Rebung Chef Ismail, which is an extension of his home. If you have visited Restoran Rebung before, you will pretty much get a feel of Chef Ismail's home.

"Every piece of furniture I acquire has its own energy," he said. He cherishes antiques especially, because to him, they last and never fade.

"I also don't believe in wasting and throwing away what one might view as old," he said. "Each piece carries with it a symbol of heritage and prestige. It leaves me feeling inspired."

And when antiques do not come by, why he simply designs his own!

Chef Ismail admits he likes things that are handmade and handcrafted. The papier-mâché nightstands in his bedroom have that divine vintage look. The elegant teak armoire was made locally. The red daybeds in the living room and the dining table are of his designs too. Sleek, polished and regal, the long and narrow teak table seats eight comfortably. Unfortunately, the furniture shop that he frequented in Jalan Tun Abdul Rahman is no longer there.

According to Chef Ismail, his fondness for colonial British and Nyonya styles comes from his uncle Tun Haji Abdul Malek bin Yusof, one of the former governors of Malacca. Being exposed to stately furniture and furnishings since young, it is





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# WHY NOT SHUFFLE YOUR FURNITURE LIKE A MAGIC CUBE?

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# Life Lights Up with Photographic Eyes

By Matt Young  
Furnish Now editor



Kitchen setup



Teak table

The typical newbie expatriate experiences loads of culture shock.

- Weird food: Zap!
- Weird words: Zap!
- Weird customs: Zap!

But for Ana Maria Munoz, it's not zap, zap, zap at all. It's click, click, click.

Ms. Munoz uses a camera to make her way through Malaysia, where she now resides. But it's not quite accurate even to say that she points and clicks, like the rest of us. Ms. Munoz's eyes can set up a shot that goes POWWWW!

You might say her photography explodes into artwork. Or perhaps it's her subsequent graphic design that increases the experience.

Either way, the world isn't menacing whether she's in her native Los Angeles or now in Kuala Lumpur. The world is arts and crafts.

"Every city, every country has something different to offer," said Ms. Munoz, 27, who previously lived in London and was born in Australia to Colombian parents. "The patterns on tiles or mosaics,



Imagined living room

or different types of trees around. Those kinds of things help one's appreciation of being in a new place. I use them as a new tool to bond and appreciate; to fall in love with a place as home."

Ms. Munoz' blog, Anamu.com, details her adventures in living. As a recovering event project manager, Ms. Munoz now eschews the corporate world for something grander: life itself. Unlike many other blogs, Anamu gives us more than a glimpse of one person's obsessions. It reveals much of her, but also much of what our own lives could be if we were to look on the bright, artistic side of things.

It's simple enough to do. Ms. Munoz's life begins at home.

Take her new teak table, for instance, purchased at authenTEAK in Kuala Lumpur.

"I want to have pieces that are special

and beautiful at home," Ms. Munoz said. "The teak table is one of those pieces we are going to come home to."

What caught Ms. Munoz's eye was the slanted edge of the bottom of the table.

"It's subtle, but it almost resembles a Chinese character," said Ms. Munoz, who lives with her partner Joe in downtown Kuala Lumpur. "We love it because it's so sturdy. It's handcrafted; you can tell."

Considering that Ms. Munoz and her partner, Joe (she declined to give his last name), move frequently, the piece isn't the most practical. It's heavy.

"But we are welcoming a local part of

# Extraordinary living, beautiful furniture and more in one expat's Kuala Lumpur



Here: Joe  
At Right and Above:  
Ana Maria Munoz

where we live now into our home," Ms. Munoz said. "That is special to us. We are excited to take this with us wherever we end up going."

Or, sometimes it's about not going anywhere. One of the biggest storms Ms. Munoz and Joe (she declined to give his last name) saw in Kuala Lumpur was actually from indoors at home.

"I came out of a room and saw Joe sitting there with an umbrella [open]," Ms. Munoz said. "He knew I was going to come

out and find him like that. It was such a moment. I snapped it."

Even from Ms. Munoz's globetrotting perch, she knows how ordinary life can seem.

"There are so many mundane things in life but there are ways to make them more exciting," Ms. Munoz said. "I want to surround myself in things that have beauty in them. Even if they're slippers. I want to look down at my feet and smile."

Out of doors, Ms. Munoz loves heading to Penang.

"We are really impressed with Georgetown," Ms. Munoz said. "There's a

lot going on in the arts scene between the street art, galleries and cafes. They're also renovating old buildings. So that was really exciting to find."

There or elsewhere Ms. Munoz hopes to find a good rattan chair.

"That's something I want to start research on to find...one of those lounge rattan chairs," Ms. Munoz said. "I'll put a cushion on top. I think it would be a cool piece. As long as I keep reading local magazines I'm going to come across a great chair."

*"I want to surround myself in things that have beauty in them"*  
- Ana Maria Munoz



Furniture

Leads

Forward

by Majella Gomes  
Furnish Now writer

Malaysian furniture is getting smarter, lovelier, greener and just plain better



One look at what most furniture manufacturers display in showrooms these days will tell you that more went into the production of their items than mere fabric, foam and furniture polish.

The styles, shapes, sizes and colours all point to one thing: When it comes to furniture, what you buy has to reflect a look, a lifestyle, a certain level of taste.

What it tells you is that manufacturers today are putting more effort into what they produce. They're looking beyond functionality, and acknowledging that the furniture consumer's purchase has to suit many criteria. Some of these are exclusive to the purchaser, but others can be projected or anticipated, based on trends, environmental dynamics and demographics such as gender, culture and age.



## More stylish

Award-winning furniture manufacturer Hin Lim is a stellar example of marrying the functional with the aesthetically pleasing to produce stylish, upmarket designs that look good in any home. It certainly works hard to live up to its tagline of “Trends come and go but design that is functional never goes out of style” with designs that are eco-friendly and bring together form and function, at a price that most people can afford.

What strikes the observer about the Hin Lim catalogue is the neatness and precision of the products. There is nothing ornate or overpowering about the pieces that Hin Lim creates; It’s all about clean lines, elegance and making less do more. Colours, tones and shapes all support an eco-friendly philosophy, and clever use of curves gives movement to otherwise static forms.

Hin Lim’s CEO, Thomas Lim, said that the company’s focus is primarily on urban lifestyle.

“It’s designed with modern, contemporary tastes—and the lifestyles that naturally develop from these—in mind,” he explained. “Our target market is quite wide, however. It ranges from young adults in their early 30s to the more mature but no less upmarket purchasers in their 50s. We don’t design for a specific group or a specific lifestyle but our furniture has very wide appeal across the board. Customers particularly like our dining sets. These seem to appeal to the Asian market, primarily, although they are gaining acceptability in many other regions as well.”

*“[Our furniture is] designed with modern, contemporary tastes—and the **lifestyles** that naturally develop from these—in mind”  
– Thomas Lim, Hin Lim*



Here, and at Top: Hin Lim emphasises stylish, upmarket designs

## More rustic

In contrast, another award winner, Kinheng Furniture, takes quite a different route, offering burnished wooden sideboards, and ornate bedroom furniture among other products in its gallery. Its bedroom sets especially have the comfortable, solid designs which hark back to an era when the height of bedroom chic was a four-poster with a mattress you could get lost in, with matching ruffled sheets and shams!

Kinheng's bedroom sets are certainly designed to impress. However, the manufacturer professes to two distinct design philosophies: one that is elaborate with a rustic, almost antique feel to it, and a second which answers contemporary needs with less ornamentation and more utility. This clever market positioning allows the company to capitalise on several segments simultaneously.

Considering that Kinheng started out only in the early 1990s as a manufacturer of fibre board furniture concentrating on entertainment units, the company has grown by leaps and bounds in the design department. It now offers a full spectrum of wooden home furniture including living, dining and bedroom sets, consoles, entertainment cabinets and occasional tables. According to Desmond Lee, Kinheng's Export Manager, pieces are designed to suit clients' market requirements.

"However, we do incorporate some of our own creativity into what the customer wants, in order to make the pieces stand out," Mr. Lee said. "There is also a certain degree of functionality worked into our furniture as well. It has to be attractive and useful."

At Kinheng, it's about living large, expansively, and in rustic country style.



*Kinheng furniture's version of bedroom chic*

## Less cluttered

At the other end of the spectrum is BJ Cabinet, which prides itself on offering furniture that fits into limited space. Space-saving furniture is a lucrative market, especially when one considers the number of urban dwellers who live in space-constrained environments today. What is interesting about BJ's products is the careful attention to size and how this is incorporated with functionality. Bordering on the Spartan, BJ's products grab your attention by looking uncluttered. They are neat, as if perfectly measured to fit into



*BJ Cabinet understands elegant design in limited space*

whichever little corner of your tiny apartment you choose to place them. Designing furniture at this level definitely reflects how familiar the designer is with limited space, and the importance of being in touch with social dynamics, and how this affects the way people live today.

In another nod to the ever-decreasing living space we have to contend with today, BJ's designers have come up with pared-down versions of the ubiquitous TV cabinet—and they've put it on wheels for convenience. Ideal for small spaces or when you need to put it out of the way, the company's Zome series offers items that are compact and stylish, and would not look out of place even in a large space. Convenient and utilitarian, they qualify as "cute" too. Of special note is BJ's Kid's Set. BJ brings kids' furniture into the lifestyle arena in many ways. Its children's bedroom sets are stellar examples of smart design.



*BJ Cabinet combines substance and style, both in adult and children's furniture*

## Less dull

While its respective lounge, dining and living pieces make the best of constricted space with clean-cut, pared-down designs that combine substance and style, its children's bedroom sets put the "fun" in "functional." What child won't want to sleep in a bed that resembles the top deck of a double-decker bus, literally on top of all his/her belongings?

The Kid's Set has individual modular pieces that can be used on their own or combined with other items. This allows for furniture that "grows" with the child. Pieces that include a bed, desk, wardrobe, chest of drawers and side table can be added, or rearranged as necessary. The pull-out or trundle bed can be rolled out for a sleepover, or used as extra storage space.

Children's needs change as they develop, and bright, attractive colours can be exchanged for more muted tones as they get older. The clever use of colour together with versatile pieces can alter a nursery into a room that any teen could be proud of, with just the minimum of fuss.

## More leather

Shung Seng Enterprise is yet another example of how a little creativity can go a long way. Other manufacturers may have clean lines and elegant finishing; Shung Seng takes it to another level with the incorporation of leather. Leather is luxury, and in Shung Seng's case, leather lends a sleekness to its dining and bedroom sets that is hard to beat. Using leather says a lot. It has an elegance that can never be equaled by fabric. Leather wears well; fabric wears out.

Fabric may be sumptuous but leather can be simultaneously decadent and refined, avant-garde yet traditional; Shung Seng's pieces come across as simultaneously sleek, stylish and sensational. Shung Seng has managed to make it all look



*Shung Seng brings luxury to the bedroom*

effortless, even using coloured leather for some of its products, projecting a more upbeat, upmarket appearance.

Its bedroom and dining sets combine wood and leather for stunning contemporary, almost futuristic, effect. Most of the beds offer high headboards and all-round upholstery, extending the luxury just that little bit more.

And just when you think that there are no more ways of making leather work, Shung Seng has found another niche: pub dining furniture. It's taken an obviously successful formula, and dared to go where few have wandered before—and scored another hit.

Old school and new style combine in its pub furniture. The ubiquitous leather pub chair gets an upgrade with longer legs, a swivel seat and better support. Shung Seng is not shy about using contemporary colours either. Its upholstery comes in bright red, olive green and warm cream, besides the standard black, white and brown.



## More understanding

But it's not just about looks or creating a certain ambiance. The curve of the chair back indicates how much support is incorporated into the design, which means that these items will probably be used for a long, long time. The Malaysian furniture manufacturing industry may not be as mature as it is in other Asian countries, but Malaysian manufacturers demonstrate a certain level of market-savvy, and a quick eye for lifestyle trends that are taking the industry to another level.

"We do not target a specific market," conceded Mr. Lee modestly, "but we do have some loyal buyers in specific markets, and we design our items to fit those markets. If our designs are viewed as suitable for other markets (which largely depends on the buyers who attend exhibitions), we'd definitely consider that a bonus!"

Divulging that Kinheng concentrates on bedroom sets as these are its most saleable items, Mr. Lee added that the Middle East used to be a big market but demand has evened out globally, and he sees the company's products being distributed in many more areas these days. He feels there is a reason for this: buyers' tastes in general.

"Buyers' tastes are really a combination of everything," he said, indicating the difficulty in pinpointing a singular reason for market demand. "We see our items as middle- to higher-end products, so they need to be better designed, better manufactured, maybe even exclusive. But they still have to maintain that element of pragmatism that allows them to be used in practical, everyday ways."

Concurring on this point, Mr. Lim said that furniture which is both functional and practical always gets a second look.

"Hin Lim doesn't design for a specific market," he confirmed. "But according to feedback from our customers, as well as our own due diligence, the urban look and modern, minimalist furniture may well be the trend in the near future."

Kinheng sets its sights on the ground when it comes to finding out what the customer wants. Mr. Lee said that company representatives visit trade shows and exhibitions, but "the best research is actually to visit our customers' shops to gauge market requirements and trends."



*The Infinito series is for the progressive-minded in office space*

*"When you feel well you can perform well"*  
– Jane Lee,  
Oasis Furniture  
Industries

## More responsible

Meanwhile, one trend finding its way to office space is a chair that makes you feel good—physically, emotionally and even environmentally.

It's the Infinito series, by Oasis Furniture Industries.

"We want to give people infinite

power," said Oasis Marketing Executive Jane Lee. "When you feel well you can perform well."

The Infinito series is more than just wishful thinking. It gets down to ergonomic business, being optimally adjustable in areas such as the headrest, lumbar height, and armrests.

It also conforms to the progressive mindset, containing recycled content and bio-based memory foam.

Feel good in body and spirit, and your mind will make infinitely smart choices. That seems to be the idea, and one that would suit any good CEO or executive in tune with corporate social responsibility.

So, Made-in-Malaysia furniture: Just a bunch of fabric and foam? We think not. The world would do well to continue accepting Malaysia's stance on furniture: It's got to be good, and more often than not, great.

# Some Say Size Matters

Well, space matters even more; exhibition space, that is

By Khaw Chia Hui  
Furnish Now writer

At the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF), buyers are hard-pressed to cover a lot of ground in very little time.

There's 75,000 square meters for space to see as much as they can, talk business and seal deals before the fair is over in five short days.

*"People these days are buying a lifestyle; not just one or two products"*  
- Eric Leong

With so much competition among 500 or more exhibitors, how do you make sure your company isn't the one buyers pass without even batting an eyelid?

Instead of lumping furniture pieces haphazardly into the exhibition space and keeping your fingers crossed that the product will shine by itself, why not invest a little time, effort and money to 'dress up' the space?

Renowned interior designer and regular MIFF Best Presentation judge Eric Leong shares that it is vital for every company to present a 'look' or theme during the exhibition.

He feels that the effort will go a long way to help the marketing and branding team to seal the deal.

"Without a proper theme, any product is difficult to stand out on its own," Mr.



Eric Leong

Leong said. "If you have a small space, pick a theme and don't clutter the space."

It's not just about furniture. It's about lifestyle.

"People these days are buying a lifestyle; not just one or two products," he said. "Helping the buyer to envisage how the furniture piece can function in a home setting allows them to also imagine how it

could work in their respective markets."

## Armchair designer

But let's not just be abstract here. What could you do with an armchair, for example?

"You can 'dress up' the furniture piece by adding a rug, pretty lamp, side table and so on to help 'sell' the armchair," Mr. Leong said. "It doesn't have to be overly

complicated or ambitious. You can start small. Just clever use of colour and lighting can make a big difference [compared to] just a bare space with a banner, chock-full of furniture."

Mr. Leong opined that trade fairs in Europe are the pack leaders in terms of presentation.

In his observation, 80% to 90% spend a lot of time and investment to make full use of the space by using elaborate interior design. To look for inspiration, he suggested checking out the iSaloni fair in Milan and Maison&Objet in Paris.

"If you don't get to go to those fairs to have a first-hand look, you can look at interior design magazines," Mr. Leong said. "Trends they showcase in these publications are often updated quicker than reference books and one gets a wide range of concepts."

Mr. Leong pointed out most booths that feel cramped and cluttered are those with a small space. He shared that it can be as simple as using contrasting backgrounds to let your furniture stand out.

"For example, if you have light tones in your collection, the background should be dark, and vice versa," he said. "Often black on black or white on white is very difficult to get right. It needs a lot of play on textures and essentially, you are taking a big gamble."

He also advised to pick a handful of highlight pieces and the rest of the products can be displayed on a mobile table or in the form of slide show on TV.

### Wowing the judges

Don't forget that as you're showing off for buyers, you can also show off for MIFF's judges, and take home a prized Best



An open booth is welcoming

*"At one glance at the booth, I can normally tell what tier your products are in"*  
- Eric Leong

Presentation Award (we discuss how to use the awards to their fullest on page 24).

"Often the judges look for efficient use of space and how the products are displayed," Mr. Leong said. "If the general booth is beautiful, but it is hard for us to pick out the focus point, then it disappoints in functionality."

Mr. Leong also looks for a visual impact or "wow factor."

"The booth has to be inviting as well," Mr. Leong said. "Those who apply a closed door policy are not inviting. It does send out a mixed message to the buyers. Do you want me in or keep out?"

Mr. Leong's eyes are highly perceptive. Beware of them if your booth is lacklustre.

"At one glance at the booth, I can normally tell what tier your products are in," Mr. Leong said. "Are you an OEM manufacturer or one with your own brand or one that is design-oriented? What and how you present your booth tells a story about your company. Let your booth speak for your company instead of your staff telling people what you are."

Mr. Leong feels most Malaysian manufacturers are still stuck in the price point category while those who are design-oriented are just a handful.



Making the booth like home

"It is a catch-22 situation really," he said. "But many second- or third-generation business owners are beginning to look into offering design-oriented goods instead of just cheap ones."

Another way to impress the judges is by not recycling the same display concept.

"We will know if you have used the idea before," Mr. Leong said. "The award normally has the same panel of judges so we have been charting the looks and we will definitely know if it is the same old thing from last year."

The same product collection displayed differently can be eye catching. And different.

"You can have outdoor pieces dressed for indoors," Mr. Leong said. "This way you also open to new target markets. Most importantly, create a buying atmosphere for the buyers."

### DIY, or don't do it yourself

Some companies engage a design firm to come up with the booth design, while others design with internal resources like marketing staff. There are pros and cons to each method.



TaZ Corp. always has winning concepts

"If you have a rough idea what you want to do, why not do it yourself?" Mr. Leong said. "You can learn what works and what doesn't and save on costs. This is because you know your product best. A design firm can create a holistic view but that might not be the selling point of your flagship product."

If you have no idea where to start, then approach a design firm.

"They are professionals after all," he said. "They can be more expensive than your marketing team but you will have a beautiful result."

Do your part by providing specifics to the firm, Mr. Leong said. Walk the firm through the products you want to highlight. Give them all the information pertaining to those items.

You might also want to keep in mind

Eric Leong (left) hard at work judging exhibits at MIFF

that the display indirectly promotes the product instead of the usual hard sell, he said.

Two companies benefited from external help--Hin Lim Furniture Manufacturer Sdn Bhd and BJ Cabinet Enterprise Sdn Bhd.

Hin Lim spent about RM300,000 to fine tune the concept of their furniture for MIFF 2012 with a design firm and booth contractor over a period of four months, said company COO Kenny Lim. Some 12 years ago, the company displayed its products with zero concept, and slowly found that showcase model no longer suited its products, which became design-oriented. The display concept still had to be in line with the company's product line and business direction, he said.

Meanwhile for BJ Cabinet's Sales and Marketing Director, Steven Wong, the company spent RM60,000 and found that the resulting display concept at MIFF 2012 helped it a lot during the exhibition period.

"Our business direction is to enable customers to experience a modern contemporary living environment, so our marketing strategy is to let visitors that come to visit our booth experience a pleasant living environment," Mr. Wong said. "Our booth wants to reflect the comfort of one's own living room so we came up with nine different living rooms

with different interior designs. It was able to highlight the features of the products, give a good impression to visitors and extend comfort to them."

One of the world's greatest furniture show-and-tells is coming up again in 2013. Consider telling less, showing more, and showing in a better way than ever.





Zobida Mohammed,  
Fens of Marabella,  
Trinidad

You may have heard of the “Special Relationship” between the United States and the United Kingdom.

First mentioned in 1946 by Winston Churchill, it’s a term used to describe the closely aligned diplomacy, culture, politics, economics, military and history between the two nations.

Well, Trinidad and Tobago is in the midst of a special relationship as well—with Malaysia—at least as far as furniture is concerned. That’s according to Zobida Mohammed, Secretary-Director of Fens of Marabella & St. Clair, a thriving furniture store there.

“Every year, our suppliers and friends look forward to seeing us [in Malaysia] and similarly, we also look forward to seeing them,” Ms. Mohammed said. “We have made quite a number of relationships since we first started coming to the MIFF

[Malaysian International Furniture Fair] show and we are confident that these relationships will continue to grow.”

Fens isn’t your typical furniture store, but it’s very popular in Trinidad.

There, Fens has cornered the market on computers and electronics, appliances and even exercise equipment. Daybeds and dumbbells—who else would have thought up this winning combination?

“Working in an emerging market, we have been observing the increase in demand for many high-end products and services locally,” said Ms. Mohammed, who oversees all aspects of the company.

At the end of the day, that means Ms. Mohammed is developing special relationships in Malaysia, not China.

Ms. Mohammed takes the view that price is one of the major factors when considering products from the Chinese market. However, when one prefers quality instead of quantity, concessions would have to be made. Since Fens caters to the higher-end market in Trinidad, the demand is much higher for Malaysian furniture than Chinese furniture.

Hence, Fens has been sending its representatives to MIFF every year for the past 12 years, ever since coming to know about it through *Furniture Today* magazine.

Ms. Mohammed and her husband, Fen Mohammed (Sr), do most of the sourcing and ultimately the purchasing of furniture. It’s a big job to undertake considering Fens showrooms are over 300,000 square feet in size.

Nonetheless, she feels compelled to supply new designs and keep up with the latest trends in the furniture market.

“MIFF is one of my favourite shows and Malaysia is also one of my most desired places to visit,” Ms. Mohammed said.

Ms. Mohammed doesn’t let gender hold her back. Although the furniture industry is often seen as male-dominated, Ms. Mohammed begs to differ. Since her involvement in Fens almost fifty years ago, she has seen the industry evolving and today, believes there are important opportunities for women in furniture. These include everything from designing and manufacturing to sales and marketing.

Moreover, women today also have more



By Khaw Chia Hui,  
Furnish Now writer

purchasing power, and Ms. Mohammed's involvement in the company provides a refreshing alternative viewpoint, such as the following....

"Aesthetics are important but without the proper function it would be hard for consumers to purchase based solely on aesthetics alone," Ms. Mohammed said. "I believe there must be the perfect balance of both. Generation Y consumers focus on both aesthetics and function."

Perhaps it is this special touch that enables Fens to attract the women's market. This is especially important since in today's world, women have a larger say—and sometimes the only say—when it comes to purchasing furniture for the home.

Using her insights, Ms. Mohammed has helped Fens develop a niche market in Trinidad for Malaysian furniture. This has led to an increase in imports from Malaysia every year.

Then, Fens uses this 'Malaysian' leverage to differentiate its brand and products from competitors' and from furniture from other parts of the world. To give *Furnish Now* an idea of exactly

how much Fens buys from MIFF, Ms. Mohammed said purchases from a single Malaysian manufacturer average several 40 foot-high cube containers per annum with an average order of USD\$35,000 to USD\$40,000 for each container.

Fens also has been aligned with MIFF's efforts to promote environmentally friendly furniture.

For instance, the company does its part by educating consumers about the effects of global warming and the need for sustainable development. To this end, the company offers products made from sustainable materials such as sea grass, wicker, rattan, and abaca.

Still, Ms. Mohammed acknowledged that in an emerging market, Fens lacks many of the necessary facilities and infrastructure to take certain 'green' initiatives as compared to companies from

other more developed countries.

Back to MIFF—Ms. Mohammed is amazed at the variety of new colours, styles and designs offered at the show every year. The various high-quality products on offer at the show also impress her.

*"Every year, our suppliers and friends look forward to seeing us [in Malaysia] and similarly, we also look forward to seeing them" - Zobida Mohammed*

Based on Fen's experience, the Malaysian market absolutely offers high-quality and also middle-range furniture Trinidad customers demand.

On a personal note, Ms. Mohammed said that while she travels to source for products at many other furniture fairs around the world, Malaysia is one of the family's favourite destinations.

Why?

Two big reasons, she said. Malaysia is beautiful. The People are friendly and respectful.

Ms. Mohammed, we can't wait to see you again at MIFF 2013!

# What to Do with a Leg Lamp, or Any Major Award

What would you do if you won a major award?

There's a classic movie from 1983 called *A Christmas Story* that provides some relevant instruction on this.

## Your award and good PR

The Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) offers a numerous awards annually in conjunction with its 5-day exhibition, including the Furniture Excellence Award and the Best Presentation Award. The awards are carefully thought out, and

*“When our buyers know that we have won an award, they indicate more interest in our products”*  
— Serene Teh, BJ Cabinet

Don't sit on  
your awards;  
show them off  
to the global  
neighborhood

By Majella Gomes  
Furnish Now writer

A character called The Old Man, a curmudgeon of a father in a 1940s-era American family, receives a package at home.

“Would you look at that?” He declares upon opening it. “It's a leg.”

A leg lamp, that is. Or to be completely accurate, it was a female leg-lamp in lingerie.

Likely never having won much in life, he declares it “a major award.”

“I know just the place for it!” he howls to his wife's displeasure. “Right in the middle of our front room window!”

The film's narrator comments: “It could be seen up and down Cleveland Street; the symbol of The Old Man's victory. Yeah, he won that. It's a major award.”

Clearly, in this world, some awards are a little more dubious than others. But like the leg lamp, awards don't shout about themselves. People shout about them.

In business—especially the Malaysian furniture business—people really should. Most of them really are more than just leg lamps.

judging is strict. The judges, who are all experts in their respective fields, ask probing, interrogative questions, and at the end of the day, the awards are based purely on merit.

Yet, many winners may be glossing over their awards without giving enough thought to using them for promotional purposes. If so, they're missing out according to some award winners and PR professionals who urge taking full advantage of a commendation.

“Tweet about it,” said Diane Barton, Senior Manager at PR firm Edelman Malaysia. “Put it on your Facebook page; put it on your website. If you wanted to go bigger, issue a press release to the local media—most probably magazines—to get coverage in magazines people are reading.”

You can even put an award notification on the product itself.

“When wine has won an award, the manufacturers often put a big gold star on it so when people are shopping, they know,” Ms. Barton said.

There's no reason for furniture to be different.

## Your award and good HR

She also advised award-winning manufacturers to lend a hand to others by way of service, through design workshops and at local universities. Beyond PR, this



has a company HR benefit. It's a suave way to recruit young, innovative designers.

It's also a way for current employees to feel unified, said Thomas Lim, CEO, Hin Lim Furniture Manufacturer Sdn Bhd.

"Winning awards not only builds up a good image for the company," he said. "The whole process from application until the award presentation assists to build team spirit among all the staff in the company. Everyone in the team works together with the same target and feels motivated when their work gets recognised."

## The double-edged award

Euro Chairs Manufacturing Sdn Bhd, which focuses on office furniture, and BJ Cabinet Sdn Bhd, whose strength is in furniture for the home, both are award-winning producers that exhibit items which many visitors to MIFF actually make it a point to look for.

BJ Cabinet confirms that winning awards impacts positively on the company's business.

"When our buyers know that we have won an award, they indicate more interest in our products, mainly because they have seen the products of other award-winning manufacturers as well, so there is favourable comparison," said Assistant Sales Manager Serene Teh.

More specifically, when BJ Cabinet's "Gordon" won an award, buyers who knew about it indicated more interest in this particular product. But both BJ and Euro Chair Manufacturing Sdn Bhd agree on one fact: when you're a winner, your customers expect more of you.

"Our repeat clients come back every year and ask for products that have consistently sold well in preceding years, but they also enquire about our award-winning items – and they expect to see more of the same," Ms. Teh said.

Euro Chairs, which has participated in MIFF since its inaugural exhibition—and has consistently won awards—garners

the same response from its regulars. This recognition creates an add-on effect. Winning companies do have the opportunity to leverage on their winners, while buyers find their choices considerably widened, and in order to maintain their client base, manufacturers have to find ways of coming up with better designs and features for their products.

## Don't worry—just win first

A lot can be done with a win. But of course, a lot has to be done in order to win.

Euro Chairs, which won a MIFF 2012 award for its office desking system, employs "show models"—i.e., ones which are not yet mass produced for the market—to win.

"We come up with a new product every year," said Jimmy Tan, Euro Chairs' Business Development Manager. "It takes about a year from conceptualisation to development, so that means we keep at it the whole year round."

Aside from bringing in fresh concepts that have a good chance at winning, Mr. Tan mentioned another benefit relates to production.

"We move into production when we find there is enough demand for a certain item," Mr. Tan said. The company also has more time to spot initial flaws and incorporate market feedback when employing show models.

BJ Cabinet, which again, concentrates on home furniture, emphasises an enjoyable booth experience.

"At our booth, visitors can experience a pleasant living environment," Ms. Teh said. "It's like being in their own homes; by creating this kind of atmosphere, we are able to highlight our product features."

It is no surprise that the award that BJ Cabinet won at MIFF 2012 was for booth design. But a lot of effort still is invested in the products, and this is a year-round exercise. Ms. Teh said that it takes three months from conceptualisation to being production-ready for most of the new items, and most of the items that are displayed at MIFF are new.

"In fact, we design our new products with MIFF in mind," Ms. Teh said. "Because MIFF is a truly international platform, it means that these are really 'first look' items. They've never been displayed anywhere else before."

The efforts are paying off. Both BJ Cabinet and Euro Chairs have recorded increases in sales after showing at MIFF, and report that both regular and new clients have noticed that they have won awards.

We're not pulling your leg. Strive for excellence, apply for awards, then use them to your advantage. They will help your business boom.



Winning an award at MIFF is the first step; Showing it off is the next



TrophyRoom

# DESIGN COMPETITION, RELOADED!

## MIFF readies, aims and fires more ammo at the heart of poor design

By Matt Young  
Furnish Now editor

While the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) has consistently been a powerhouse among export shows worldwide, there's always been a nagging thorn in the side of the show.

The thorn has been that of design.

While nations like Italy are known for it, Malaysia still is coming into its own in terms of embracing design of an international calibre. Each year at MIFF, there are signs of design improvement and exhibitors are getting savvy—not just with product designs but also with presentation of them.

And yet, this year MIFF wondered: How

can Malaysian designs still get better?

The answer: more comprehensive awards for young designers, older amateurs, professional designers, and even foreign furniture-minded residents of Malaysia.

Organisers have announced the MIFF Furniture Design Competition (FDC), wholly new for 2013, that should help pit the best against the best, and raise the design bar for the entire nation, expatriates included.

"We have rebranded our design contest and up the ante to challenge

designers to create furniture that reflect Malaysian lifestyle and identity," said MIFF Chairman Dato' Dr. Tan Chin Huat. "With MIFF FDC, we want to nurture innovative talent to sustain the future of the local industry and enhance the image of Malaysian-made furniture internationally."

In its debut, MIFF FDC has this important rule: that designers create furniture pieces inspired by the shapes and colours of Malaysia. So you don't have to be from Malaysia to enter. But you better understand the place, as well as materials that are suitable for furniture design.

In previous years, MIFF had targeted young talent, cultivating their furnishing aspirations with competition and cash prizes. Now it's time for the adults to show their creative stuff.

As a result, there are separate competition categories this year for professional designers and young talent.

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TrophyRoom

Prototypes of the 10 best entries will be exhibited at MIFF 2013, taking place in the Malaysian capital from March 5 to 9. Finalists will present their prototypes before the jury in the final round of judging scheduled on March 4. Winners will be announced and receive their prizes at the March 7 prize presentation ceremony.

All told, MIFF FDC prize money is valued at more than RM45,000 (more than approximately US\$14,650).

The winner in the professional category will be awarded RM15,000 followed by RM7,500 and RM5,000 for second and third place respectively. In the young talent category, the winner will receive RM10,000 and second and third place will get RM5,000 and RM2,500, respectively.

While MIFF has held young designer contests annually since 2010, there is a big jump in prize money in 2013. The top young designer prize in March 2012 was valued at RM5,000. One lucky young winner is going to take home twice that amount in 2013, while a winner of the open category will take home three times as much.

The open category is opened to Malaysians, and foreigners residing and working in Malaysia with authorised permits. The young talent category is for students with student ID.

Entries will be judged by a jury of international designers, led by Chief Judge Klaus Kummer, a renowned Thailand-based German designer.

Aspiring contestants must already have registered earlier this month.

Expect full coverage of these workshops by *Furnish Now* in the next issue.

**MALAYSIAN INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR 2013**

**MIFF FURNITURE DESIGN COMPETITION**  
A TRIBUTE TO THE SHAPES AND COLOURS OF MALAYSIA

Submission Deadline : **31 October 2012**

<b>PRIZE MONEY :</b>	(1st Prize)	(2nd Prize)	(3rd Prize)
OPEN CATEGORY :	RM15,000	RM 7,500	RM 5,000
YOUNG TALENT CATEGORY :	RM10,000	RM 5,000	RM 2,500

\*The winners will also be given a trophy & certificate

**INTERNATIONAL JURY & SHOWCASE OF 10 BEST ENTRIES**

Winners will be announced and awarded at MIFF 2013 from March 5 to 9, 2013, at Putra World Trade Centre and Matrade Exhibition and Convention Centre, Kuala Lumpur.

**REGISTER ONLINE FOR THE COMPETITION AND DESIGN WORKSHOP BEFORE 5 OCTOBER 2012**

Please visit [www.miffdc.com](http://www.miffdc.com) for more details

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MIFF In Black to M.Y.P.D (Malaysian Poor Design): Get out of town!

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# MIFF Exhibition Space Like a Good Pizza...




This is almost unheard of.

With six months until the 2013 show opens, exhibition space at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair [MIFF] is 80% booked.

Let's take a moment to recap the importance of 80%. With 80% of a pizza already eaten, there would be 2 slices out of 10 left on the table. What would you want to do in that case? Grab them before they're gone!

"In fact, 40 percent of the space for 2013 was locked in by exhibitors by the last day of MIFF 2012," said MIFF chairman Dato' Dr. Tan Chin Huat.

Compared with previous MIFF years, this represents real progress in quick and early exhibitor bookings.

MIFF 2013 is set from March 5 to 9, 2013, in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, the host city of the annual trade show since its inception in 1995.

The five-day fair will cover 75,000 square metres of display halls at the downtown Putra World Trade Centre and nearby Matrade Exhibition & Convention Centre.

The strong response from exhibitors comes on the heels of the resounding success of MIFF 2012 in raking in record sales of US\$830 million despite the uncertain global economic outlook.

"MIFF remains outstanding as one-stop source centre for furniture buyers and importers from all over the world," said Dato' Tan. "It has proven itself over and over again as the place that offers more value and wide selection with top quality. I am delighted at

the continued confidence and staunch support that further bolsters MIFF's standing as a global top 10 and number one furniture fair in Southeast Asia."

Overall, Dato' Tan expects to maintain a steady turnout of 500 Malaysian and international exhibitors and 20,000 trade visitors including 7,000 international buyers from 140 countries.

"These have been our numbers in the last few years, we are very comfortable with it given a show of our size and capacity," he said. "The bigger challenge, as always, is providing buyers with more variety and new products to get them to increase orders."

Trends at MIFF indicate that exhibitors, the majority comprising Malaysian manufacturers, are hiring local and foreign designers to unveil new innovative products every year in the form of new collections or to enhance their existing ranges.

Rubberwood furniture, office and home furniture are top sellers at MIFF.

Fair organisers are seeking to draw more industry names from ASEAN countries like Indonesia, Vietnam and Myanmar to exhibit in 2013 to offer buyers even more choices and to boost intra-trade in Southeast Asia. ASEAN is the acronym for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations comprising Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Dato' Tan said the biggest group of international buyers at MIFF currently is from ASEAN countries.

THE  
LEAST  
You Should Know about  
MIFF  
2013

**Free Admission** For buyers who pre-register online ([www.miff.com.my](http://www.miff.com.my)) before Jan 31, 2013

**Date & Host City** March 5-9, 2013 in Kuala Lumpur **Venue** Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) and Matrade Exhibition & Convention Centre (MECC) **Product Range** Bedroom & Bedding, Dining Table & Chairs, Living Room, Office, Sofa & Settee, Children, Kitchen Cabinets, Occasional, Outdoor & Garden, Fittings & Accessories

**Opening Ceremony** Graced by a government ministerial-level Guest-of-Honour followed by VIP tour of the trade show on Mar 5, 2013

**Buyers' Night** Gala dinner for international buyers and invited guests to unwind and enjoy a dazzling entertainment treat on Mar 6, 2013 **Prize Presentation Ceremony** A much anticipated affair to announce winners of Best Presentation Award,

Furniture Excellence Award and Designer Competition on Mar 7, 2013 **Best Presentation Award** Best designed booth to

encourage creative strategies to pull in the crowd, co-organised by MIFF and Malaysian Timber Council **Furniture Excellence Award** Most creative furniture design to recognise product innovation and quality

**MIFF Furniture Design Competition** New contest to seek innovative furniture inspired by the shapes and colours of Malaysia. It has two categories—Open and Students **Industry Seminars** Keep up with the latest trends

by attending seminars with international industry experts as speakers

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