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INTERNATIONAL



FURNITURE
FAIR

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The official magazine of the
Malaysian International Furniture Fair

DECEMBER
2012

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**SPECIAL
PRE-SHOW
ISSUE**





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Letter to Readers

Behold: Even Better Furniture at MIFF 2013

A charming bed for a countryside rest.
A dining table that serves as a great conversation piece.

An office system that creates a more natural environment feel.

This is the type of furniture that awaits you at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) in 2013.

In other words, don't expect furniture commodities at MIFF in 2013. Expect furniture that entertains the eye, delights the soul and has a definitive place in homes and offices across the globe.

Don't take our word for it.

Flip to *Furnish Now's* Cover Story to see what's in store for you at MIFF 2013. We are very proud of this year's exhibitor collections.

We have noticed, for example, that manufacturers are creating much more than quality furniture now. They are creating quality furniture photos, which highlight pieces in appropriate settings. Some exude a rustic feel, while others give off a snazzy modern look.

Importantly—according to our editors—these images in comparison to those in last year's Fabulous Furniture section suggest that Malaysia has taken a big step forward in design awareness. We are pleased to hear this and are confident that international buyers will be even more pleased to see this.

In this issue of *Furnish Now*, we also pay tribute to some of Malaysia's finest furniture companies. Their furniture may speak for itself, but it's also good to know the stories behind these companies too. These companies are solid, backed by years of history and heritage. Doesn't it feel good to know that when you're buying by the container?

So much of Malaysian furniture is making a mark globally. In this issue, we also talk to one Malaysian manufacturer exporting premium furniture to the Middle East—a booming region more exporters should become familiar with.

One first step in doing so may be enhancing international-calibre designs. We cover MIFF's new Furniture Design Competition (FDC) in this issue, which aims to educate us all in this regard.

And let's face it, MIFF is a lot of fun, partly because of its great Kuala Lumpur location. We explore the city's night spots in this issue to help show visitors a great time out once they arrive.

There is a lot more to explore in this important, pre-show issue of *Furnish Now*. We won't keep you any longer. Turn the page and delve in!

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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This Is No Mirage: Oasis' Premium Furniture Is In The Desert

By Alexandra Wong
Furnish Now writer



Arabia is
becoming home
to premium
Malaysian furniture



Oasis' Alivio range (at left) and
Costelio range (above)

You don't have to be a prince or an oligarch anymore to benefit from the kind of business done in the Middle East. You could just be a Malaysian furniture maker.

Massive luxury hotels—which redefine the meaning of decadence—and swathes of premium real estate have sprung up like flowers in the Arabian desert amid various government efforts to diversify the economy beyond oil harvesting.

One company that has noticed these trickle-down niches is aptly named Oasis Furniture Industries Sdn. Bhd., a Kluang-based office seating solution provider. This ergonomics seating specialist is emerging as a power player within the high-end (and high-margin) luxury office furniture sector, winning a slew of prestigious projects in airports, luxury hotels and international corporate sites in the Middle East.

What has helped them to make their mark in this region?

"Understanding buyers' preference plays a very important role today," asserts Oasis' founder and Managing Director Ralph Ong. "A critical stage in our chair design process is ergonomics evaluation. To ensure our product designs are adaptive to our clients' projects, we visit our clients on site to understand their unique needs and specifications, such as shape and colour selection. Our experienced R&D team and product designers will study their regional culture as well."

Oasis' Alivio range, which is slated for deployment at an upcoming airport in the Middle East, embodies what it calls "intelligent luxury."

"The luxurious chrome feel creates a graceful first impression," explained Ms. Lee, an Oasis marketing executive. "When you sit on the chair, you experience a sensation of wellness because the Y-shaped backrest follows the natural curve of your back. It allows your spine to rest comfortably when leaning on it, hence your body enjoys natural support. It's warmth, elegance, class and wellness in one."



The company's other popular range, Costelio, features a unique button-studded design of the backrest intended to recreate a luxe feeling and to support the natural S-curve of the spine. The space between two buttons creates a "push" to support the body's curves.

"The button-studded design causes the bottom of the backrest to thrust outward, lending additional support to our lumbar," Ms. Lee said. Additionally, the soft padding provides a comfortable resting place for the arms and hands.

Oasis seeks buyers who appreciate these attributes: the quality of furniture workmanship, the excellence of design and an



understanding of ergonomics and technology. As early as 2000—when local players were still concentrating on the low-to-medium-end volume-based business approach—Oasis already planned on upping its game. Through a line of products called Oasis Platinum, the company consciously positioned itself as a provider of the highest quality products with intelligent design and master craftsmanship. The company began offering prestige levels of purchase at a price that would give original Italian products keen competition.

"To stand out in the fiercely competitive furniture market, I always tell my team to think of ways on staying different," said the forward-thinking Mr. Ong, who also has gone on business radio channel BFM 89.9 to talk about the green evolution in furniture, and has Twitter and LinkedIn accounts.

"The high-end buyer can be in the corporate towers, small or medium business, or in a home office," Mr. Ong said. "The common bond is the appreciation of quality."

In recent years, greater disposable incomes, evolving lifestyles and increased brand consciousness have invariably led to a rise in demand for luxury goods—including furniture. Yes, the Middle East experienced a momentary hiccup during the Arab Spring, but the economic juggernaut seems to be rolling again if numbers are any barometer. According to the International Monetary Fund's *Regional Economic Outlook: Middle East and Central Asia* (released November 11, 2012), projects in the Middle East and North Africa region grew at 5.1 percent in 2012, up from 3.3 percent in 2011, while the region's oil-exporting countries are expected to post solid growth in 2012.

More regional business also means more competition, but Mr. Ong isn't worried. In fact, he's thrilled for high-end Middle Eastern consumers.

"From a luxury standpoint, when there's more competition, not only are you going to have competitive pricing, but customers will get to pick the cream of more and better products," he said.

No doubt with Oasis in the region, the cream isn't about to dry up anytime soon.

Pictured on this page: Oasis' Costelio range



By Chan Li Jin
Furnish Now writer

Buy it from a respectable office

Perhaps no people on Earth understand the work-life balance better than the Kapauku of Papua, New Guinea. If they work hard one day, they usually rest the next.

As for the !Kung people of southern Africa, who work only 2.5 days per week, the balance is in favour of life.

Things aren't much harder in the Sandwich Islands—at least for men—who work on average four hours per day.

The *Geography of Time: On Tempo, Culture, and the Pace of Life*, by Robert Levine, prove that the Kapauku, !Kung people and men of the Sandwich Islands are amazing outliers among the world's working class.

For a moment—or more than a moment—you might want to be one of these guys. Imagine calling it quits on Wednesday afternoon for the rest of the week, or at noon every day.

But the last thing you'd want to do is buy office furniture from these people, or anyone that isn't among the world's hardest working.

For high quality office furniture, you'd want to buy from someone that knows something about work. You'd want to buy from someone that might even be obsessed with it.

That's when you'd look to Euro Holdings Berhad.

For Lew Fatt Sin, Group Managing Director and Founder of Euro Holdings Berhad, work means more than just clocking in and clocking out. It's more than an occupation, or even a long-term career. With more than 50% of his staff working with him for over 10 years and a significant number working more than 20-30 years, the 53-year-old pioneer in office furniture believes that one's colleagues are part of an extended family.



Whether you believe in the concept of a work family or not, you've got to hand it to Euro Holdings for convincing the majority of its employees to stay with the company more than a decade. This is especially true in Asia, where employee retention is among the most critical problems. And where the office environment flourishes, office furniture has to play a critical part. It has to be superior.

Furnish Now caught up with Mr. Lew in his factory in Rawang, Selangor, for a chat about the work of office furniture.



Lew Fatt Sin

FN: 36 years is a long time to stay in business. What would you consider to be your staying power?

Lew: I believe in hard work, integrity and reliability. Quality control and timely delivery are also important values in our business. These are our main philosophies that have contributed to our brand reputation. We are also thankful to have loyal employees who share our brand vision and work with us wholeheartedly to make it a reality. That is our biggest achievement.

FN: How did Euro Holdings get started?

Lew: As a teenager in the 1970s, I used to work for a sofa maker. I left to open my own furniture business called Fatt Sin Enterprise in 1975, initially also producing sofas. When I was exposed to office furniture five years later, I was attracted to it because it was clean and slick. I decided to focus on office furniture at that time because there were not many producers then. We upgraded our business to a 'Sendirian Berhad' (Private Limited) in 1984 and rebranded our business into Euro Chairs Sdn Bhd in 1986

targeting the global market. We became publicly listed in the year 2004.

FN: What were the major challenges over the years?

"I believe in hard work, integrity and reliability"
—Lew Fatt Sin,
Group Managing Director,
Euro Holdings Berhad

Lew: In the beginning, we just took one step at a time, growing and expanding at our own speed. We invested heavily on international furniture fairs such as MIFF and managed to get business from Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, New Zealand and Australia. It was actually easier in the early years because we were small, with about 20 staff. Now we have over 700 staff in 3 factories, so it is more challenging to handle. The main challenges we face today, which we believe are similar to all other industries, are labour problems, increasing prices of raw materials, good quality materials and growing competition in

local and international markets.

FN: How has your growth affected your business strategies?

Lew: As a listed company, we do things differently now. In the past, we could make decisions quickly among ourselves. Now we have to be accountable to our board of directors and shareholders, so every business decision needs to be carefully discussed and weighed. Sometimes, it affects the speed

of implementation.

FN: What are your main expert markets?

Lew: That's hard to say because we export to over 50 countries worldwide. Our latest metal cabinets have even made their way to Africa, Lebanon and Mozambique.

FN: What are the latest trends in office furniture?

Lew: Our latest focus is on metal storage systems; we have invested more than RM30 million (US\$9.8 million) for machinery and technology to produce metal cabinets.



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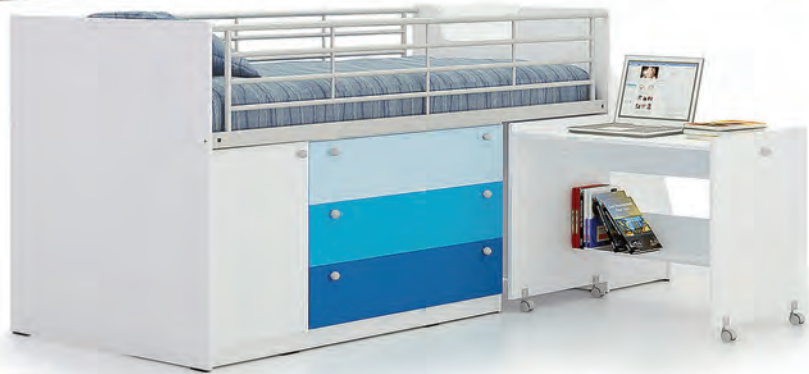




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Wish You Were Here!

In fact, you can be. Visit Malaysia, her great sunsets, and of course, these fantastic furniture makers at MIFF 2013....

By Alexandra Wong and Li Shian Yeo
Furnish Now writers

A typical Malaysian furniture town

Photo credit: Tuah Roslan

KINHENG FURNITURE

From humble beginnings as a TV cabinet manufacturer, Kinheng Furniture has evolved into one of Malaysia's superior furniture manufacturers and exporters. This is all thanks to innovative designs and advanced fully-integrated manufacturing facilities.

Today, Kinheng is a big name in producing an array of high quality natural solid wood-based home furniture sets. After securing its first overseas orders from a Middle East buyer in the inaugural Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) in 1995, Kinheng has since been a regular at this highly anticipated furniture exhibition in Asia. This Malaysian manufacturer is a must-see for visitors at MIFF, and it never disappoints.

What's in store for MIFF 2013? Desmond Lee, export manager of Kinheng Furniture, said that the Sungai Buloh-based manufacturer will be presenting its latest range of bedroom set designs.

"As living spaces get more compact, we are targeting more homes that require functional yet eye-pleasing bedroom sets," Mr. Lee said. "We will also be exhibiting two whole series of living room occasional and dining sets which complement two of the bedroom sets in the series."

Marketed under two brands—KAEY and TITOV—Kinheng's furniture collections are pieces that not only feature functionality but also exude luxurious comfort. The manufacturer's team of design experts are always brainstorming how to present the best products to its clients.

Citing finishing as one of the important parts in furniture, the manufacturer is set to wow visitors with some finishing surprises.

"Buyers are coming with particular targets in mind while sourcing for fresh ideas," Mr. Lee said. "We hope our surprise will interest them."



Kinheng believes in the power of solid wood



Len Cheong believes in the simple, yet functional

LEN CHEONG FURNITURE

With its roots in export furniture manufacturing and sawmilling, Len Cheong Furniture (LCF) is one of the leading rubberwood furniture manufacturers in Malaysia. Backed by a total workforce of 700 staff, the Seremban-based manufacturer prides itself on its wide access to overseas markets, with more than 90% of exports going to the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan and Korea.

At MIFF 2013, the wholly-owned subsidiary of publicly listed Len Cheong Holding Bhd will be highlighting its urban series of products, ranging from bedroom sets to dining and living room occasional items.

"We will present an array of products which are simple and modern in design, yet functional," said Cheryl Fong, Managing Director of LCF.

With only four months left before the next MIFF, LCF is in full swing to present the best deal to its customers. The company, which operates from three factories covering a total land area of 45,000 square meters, plans to deliver its bests at MIFF 2013 and hopes to attract more foreign buyers.

"Currently, we are still in the process of new product research, development and sampling stages," Ms. Fong explained. "We are expecting to be more price competitive for next year too."

As MIFF is one of the significant events for LCF, this award-winning company also is working out a promotion programme to reward loyal and supportive clientele.

"And MIFF 2013 is the best platform for us to meet customers from over 100 countries worldwide," she added. "We are really looking forward to it."

SOON HER SING INDUSTRIES

Soon Her Sing Industries is the classic example of a Malaysian success story.

Established in 1987, subcontractor Ng Jui Nam set up a furniture enterprise with his brothers and nephews after gaining experience as a subcontractor in Singapore.

What he lacked in paper qualifications he certainly made up in foresight. From the start, he knew continuous innovation was imperative to gain a competitive edge in the burgeoning industry. He was one of the earliest to invest in state-of-the-art machinery from Italy, Germany and Austria and set up a separate quality control department to elevate the quality to international standards.

From a small 10-worker enterprise, it has become a leading manufacturer with more than 250 workers and exports to more than 55 countries, with Asia Pacific (20%) and the Middle East (30%) making up the bulk of the company's clientele. An unstinting attention to quality has paid off.

S.L. Lim, General Manager of Soon Her Sing, recalled how in India, a customer approached her clutching their old catalogues, lamenting that "Nobody makes such durable quality furniture these days."

The company became the first furniture company in the region to be awarded the ISO 9001:2000 standard. It's also one of the few companies that regularly sends its products to internationally recognised independent bodies like BIFMA (Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer's Association) and FIRA (Furniture Industry Research Association) for product improvement tests.

"Telling is one thing," Ms. Lim said. "You still need to prove your claims with certification."

At MIFF 2013, Soon Her Sing looks forward to showing off the latest models from its critically acclaimed best-selling range 'ACMI' and 'OVIA', both of which cater to office and home furniture respectively. The company also plans on solidifying its foothold in the European, South American and North American markets as well.

"We've always kept a low profile, but we've got some exciting products lined up for this year's MIFF," Ms. Lim said.



Soon Her Sing believes in durable, quality furniture



Reliable Furniture believes in beauty in limited space

RELIABLE FURNITURE

One of the primary drivers of Malaysia's furniture industry is the advent of rubberwood as a raw material for furniture production.

Abundantly available in Muar and the neighbouring districts Segamat and Batu Pahat—and even beyond in Malacca and Negeri Sembilan—rubberwood's selling points compared to other solid timber are its availability in large volume and adaptability. Combined, these factors positioned Malaysia as a volume-maker of attractive rubberwood furniture. That meant it also was an attractive investment destination.

Singaporean Goh Chew Tee read the tea leaves. A furniture veteran with decades of handling overseas markets, Mr. Goh

got together with a few Malaysian and Singaporean partners to set up Reliable Furniture in 2000 as a specialist in solid wood and veneer products.

"For us, it was most important to find a base where raw materials were easy to be available," said Mr. Goh, now Managing Director of Reliable Furniture.

With industrialisation, southern Malaysia had spun off all kinds of support industries related to furniture making, such as makers of coating, varnishing, finishing, fabrics, foams, adhesives, glass and mirror. They were mainly set up by former employees who, after gaining years of experience, formed their own companies and supplied parts to their former employers.

"Because of [the region's] long history in furniture making, hardware was also very easy to secure, compared to other countries where the industry is not so developed," Mr. Goh said.

For the upcoming MIFF, Reliable Furniture will be unveiling a range of modular, space-optimised furniture.

"Today small apartments are the norm with spaces becoming premium," Mr. Goh said. "The right kind of furniture can bring out the beauty of even the most limited space. As a forward-looking manufacturer, we want to offer solutions to help consumers achieve that goal."



Triswift Designs believes in products based on market trends

TRISWIFT DESIGNS

At slightly over 10 years old, Triswift may be young compared to other Malaysian old-timers, but it has wasted no time in building a wide customer base encompassing over 60 countries that span a variety of segments, from chain stores to wholesalers, and retailers to restaurants.

Its secret? An unerring eye on the future. From manufacturing self-labeled bedroom furniture, dining furniture, occasional sets, living room sets and bedroom sets, it quickly diversified to OEM services, and actively sought strategic global partnerships. Recently, it joined forces with a Vietnamese factory to produce oak and pine wood furniture product ranges. To strengthen the global business, Founder and Managing Director B.G. Tan travels frequently to the United States, Australia, Central America, South

America and Europe every year to meet Triswift's customers and observe market trends.

At MIFF 2013, Triswift is going for an elegant and cozy theme in its booth design interior, which the company feels would allow the quality and design of products to take centre stage.

While the main focus still is on wooden dining sets, Mr. Tan said, "This year we are giving renewed focus to product design and quality as per our slogan, 'Ahead In Quality and Designs.'"

POH HUAT GROUP OF COMPANIES

As one of the most progressive furniture manufacturers in Southeast Asia, Poh Huat Group of Companies has successfully established a strong customer base in more than 60 countries in five continents for its high-quality home and office products.

"It was not an easy journey," said Tay Kim Huat, Managing Director of Po Huat, but the journey has met with success.

"We dare not say we are the largest key player in the furniture business in Malaysia," said Mr. Tay.

"Let's put it this way: Every player—big or small—has contributed significantly

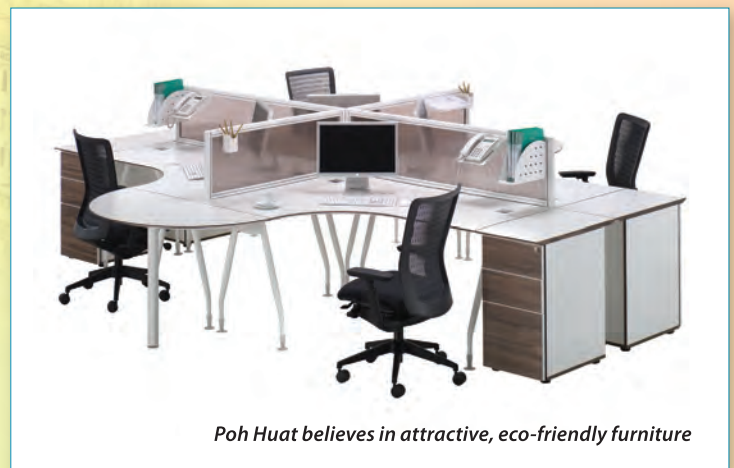
to the development of the industry."

Part of Poh Huat's appeal is eco-friendliness.

Realising the importance of environmental conservation, Poh Huat invests heavily in imported state-of-the-art eco-friendly furniture manufacturing technologies from Japan, Italy and Germany.

Manufacturing at Poh Huat also is multinational.

With production operations in Malaysia and Vietnam, office and home product ranges are produced using natural veneer, and solid and reconstituted wood panels and marketed under the brand name AT.



Poh Huat believes in attractive, eco-friendly furniture



Backed by more than 26 years of furniture manufacturing expertise, the company is supported by a team of more than 7,000 committed staff in three plants. In 2000, the company was listed on the Main Board of the Malaysia Stock Exchange.

In order to increase core business competencies and to observe current market trends, Mr. Tay travels extensively to China, the United States and Canada to visit various international fairs every year. While the United States remains the company's main export market, Poh Huat strives to offer the best comprehensive line-up of furniture products and services tailored to customers' needs.

**“Every player—big or small—
has contributed significantly to the
development of the industry”**

**- Tay Kim Huat,
Managing Director,
Poh Huat Group of Companies**



*Golden Home Elegance believes in
optimizing furniture orders*

GOLDEN HOME ELEGANCE

In the overseas markets, warehousing companies provide the perfect solution to retailers and wholesalers who want to purchase a variety of furniture from different manufacturers, without having to go for big bulk. One such company is the California-based Homelegance Group, which operates more than 15 furniture warehouses across North America, as well as in Asia-Pacific.

Founded by Chinese-American Hutch Chao two decades ago, the company then set up a warehouse in Malaysia ten years ago. It did so well that the company recently shifted from the original 60,000 square foot premise in Bakri to Pagoh Industrial Area, where a 100,000 square foot warehouse now is in operation.

“There is definitely potential,” said Finance Manager Theresa Lau. “We order from different manufacturers in big volumes, then mix up the items in one container, before reselling to the Middle East, Australia, and other countries. Customers can order smaller quantities for mix container shipments from our warehouse in Malaysia or direct shipment from China, Vietnam or the Philippines, so they don’t have to purchase in big volumes—which can affect cash flow—or incur storage charges.”

This business model, also known as case goods trading, is not very common in Malaysia, so Ms. Lau looks forward to sharing the company's suite of services at MIFF 2013.

“We supply any business capable of taking deliveries of 20 foot and 40 foot containers, ranging from independent retailers to wholesalers,” she said.

The Final Analysis

Hardworking Malaysians who learned the business at home and abroad...an abundance of high-quality raw materials...perseverance—These are a few reasons behind the success of Malaysia's furniture companies.

And let's not forget: They also have exhibited at MIFF for many years, and will for many years to come. MIFF has been an excellent venue for them to showcase new models and designs, while having important discussions with the international community. Many exhibitors encountered their first overseas buyers at MIFF many years ago, and MIFF remains their trusted partner.

MIFF, and Malaysian furniture manufacturing. Hand-in-hand, they embrace 2013 with optimism like never before.

Section design is based on photos taken by Tuah Roslan.



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Simply Transformed

Euro Chairs has been long heralded for its standout office system solutions. Keeping in mind clients' desire for a simple yet space-effective workstation, its latest concept, Transform, is designed to be quite compact. The all-white finishes were chosen primarily to bring out harmoniousness. "We wanted a clean style—something more free and natural," said Jimmy Tan, Export Manager of the Selangor-based Euro Chairs. "Instead of conventional partitions, the metal storage acts as partitions and doubles up as a workstation." The system's matching office chairs made of PP Nylon comes with a unique Synchro mechanism, which allows infinite-angle locking of the chair.

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Bold, Beautiful and Comfy

Excellent cushion seats have to look good, and just as critically, feel good. Comfort is a key ingredient for leading cushion seating solution provider, Shung Seng Enterprise. This 19-year-old manufacturer designs high quality upholstery chairs tailored to your ever changing lifestyle. Further, signature dining sets like this one are made of superior raw materials. The table is composed of an artful balance of MDF and Beech veneer top. The furniture legs are made of solid Beech imported from Germany. Striped-pattern fabric on the cushion seating also adds a dash of bold to the furniture set.

Company Name: Shung Seng Enterprise Sdn Bhd

Booth: 111, PWTC

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A Timeless, Two-in-One Closet

Gaoya's contemporary furniture piece is a hit among Middle Eastern buyers. The reason is simple. "They treasure simplicity and black is the most preferred colour," said Khoo Siew Len, Managing Director of the Penang-based Gaoya. "And we offer just that. Yet our creation is timeless." Made of Grade E2 particle board, its two-in-one four-deck closet comes with a dresser. This must-have furniture piece is equipped with an easy-to-assemble mechanism, enabling home owners to keep or remove the dresser compartment based on changing needs. Established in 2002, Gaoya is now one of Malaysia's primary home furniture exporters.

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Website: www.gy-furniture.com





Urban Essentials

After 50 years, what makes Len Cheong Furniture so highly in demand? Functionality and aesthetic values, which absolutely shine in the latest Amour collection. This versatile day bed made of a rubberwood-and-MDF combo comes with a simple design, yet it serves a very practical purpose. "Our latest collection suits urbanites' needs, especially those who live in space-constrained apartments," said Michelle Wan, Senior Marketing Manager of the Malacca-based Len Cheong. An extra trundle bed (hidden underneath) also doubles as a storage box, such that the vanilla-hued daybed is an instant hit among foreign buyers.

Company Name: Len Cheong Furniture Sdn Bhd

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Website: www.lcfurniture.com

Classical + Functional = Irresistible!

G-Pacific's Hanover dining set is a great conversation piece. Its eye-catching table with ceramic tiled top adds a hint of vintage glamour to any modern home décor. Paired with Windsor chairs, this latest addition comes with an extension mechanism and a matching console table that fits right into any space-constrained modern homes. "We target those who will appreciate furniture that is both functional and exude a classical feel," said Kelvin Ng, Director and Founder of G-Pacific. With more than 14 years of expertise in producing tiled top dining sets, G-Pacific is set to wow you with exciting furniture pieces.

Company Name: G-Pacific Enterprise Sdn Bhd

Booth: 122, Hall 1, PWTC

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A Countryside Rest

This delightful country-style queen size bed really pops out against a bedroom with contemporary atmosphere. Using simple lines and designs, Johor-based manufacturer Asia Tube successfully achieves a sense of tranquillity in its products. Made of a rubberwood and metal tube combo, its range of visually-appealing furniture pieces is in high demand in the international market, and specifically Europe, Australia and the Middle East. "A wood and metal tube combo is a very niche market in the furniture business," said Amos Lee Chee Heng, General Manager of Asia Tube. "But clients can rest assured by our over 18 years of expertise."

Company Name: Asia Tube Industries Sdn Bhd

Booth: 225, Hall 2, PWTC

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Just Plain Cute

What's not to love about this exciting new children's bedroom set by BJ Cabinet? The 4-piece Victoria bedroom set with colourful candy-like rope handles is an ideal choice for any modern home. Made of melamine clad particleboard, this line of products has a smooth surface and is moisture-resistant. Suitable for young children and teenagers, the series only comes in pure quiet shades of white. Driven by more than 20 years of expertise, BJ Cabinet is backed by a strong R&D team that develops stunning designs every year.

Company Name: BJ Cabinet Enterprise Sdn Bhd

Booth: 115, PWTC

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Website: www.bjcabinet.com



Absolute Functionality

This multifunctional bed by MG Furniture stands out for its stunning natural, cream-hued look. According to Eunice Thang, Marketing Manager of MG, each piece comes with a bookshelf and a display shelf, providing home owners with nifty storage space. Whether you own a small apartment or a huge bungalow, this bed helps to optimise space without sacrificing style. Created with superb craftsmanship—a perfect combo of paper-laminated particle board and metal, it comes with an easy-to-assemble mechanism. MG adheres strongly to its brand identity by producing stackable furniture pieces both made and packed with style, uniqueness and creativity.

Company Name: MG Furniture Sdn Bhd

Booth: 4A21, PWTC

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Website: www.mgfurniture.blogspot.com

Cool, Anti-clutter Concept

Looking for some great ways to organise your home? Let BJ Cabinet help. BJ's PUZZ Concept provides a cool accent to any contemporary theme. A palette of whites, light beiges and apple greens gives any home interior a simple, stylish flair. "The minimal usage of apple green hues in the design helps you relax while enjoying the company of friends and family," explained Steven Wong, Managing Director of BJ Cabinet. Plus, the multi-storage compartments offered by the hanging cabinet and shelves help de-clutter your home environment and classify your items neatly.

Company Name: BJ Cabinet Enterprise Sdn Bhd

Booth: 115, PWTC

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Website: www.bjcabinet.com



Good for the Office, and Environment

Oasis Furniture's Infinito Everywhere chair is light, simple, durable and very, very green by environmental standards. Its ergonomically-designed backrest cover is made of nylon and reinforced fibre with 70 percent recycled content. "Instead of using metal for its recliner mechanism, we use a moulded aluminum structure, which is 100 percent recyclable after the end of life," affirmed Ralph Ong, Founder of Oasis Furniture. This innovative product line under Oasis' Burosc brand can be used everywhere in the office—from the meeting room to the workstation area, and from the discussion area to the pantry.

Company Name: Oasis Furniture Industries Sdn Bhd

Booth: 2B23, PWTC

Contact Person: Mr. Ralph Ong

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Simplicity Rules

This minimalist style TV storage cabinet fits right into any modern home space. Made of paper laminated particle board, it is lighter in weight and more cost-saving than products made of actual wood. "Plus, the styles, patterns and colours can be customised according to clients' needs," said Toh Chin Loy, Managing Director of Muar-based Timber Art Design. With more than 16 years of experience in the furniture industry, Timber Art Design's range of high-quality furniture pieces is not only aesthetically pleasing, but also exudes a sense of simplicity.

Company Name: Timber Art Design Sdn Bhd

Booth: 105, Hall 1, PWTC

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Real Slick

Reaim has every reason to call itself an office furniture system solution specialist. It delivers practical, functional and robust solutions to clients. Its latest addition, the Candor Series, is a reliable knock-down office system; It is also a completed solution for all different classes. Sleek and eye-pleasing with a dark brown woody hue and grey combo, this user-friendly office system is a set to step up your efficiency at work. Teo Tey Chan, Reaim's Managing Director, said the company not only attaches importance to product quality and finishing, but also seriously pays attention to the selection of raw materials.

Company Name: Reaim Furniture Sdn Bhd

Booth: 2B22, PWTC

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A Bed To Behold

Best-Betek's latest bedroom set definitely is a sight to behold. Designed for maximum comfort, the faux leather bed is elegant and luxurious. Its crystal studded bed headboard and footboard feature a scroll-top sleigh design, which helps add that extra charisma to any bedroom. "At Best-Betek, quality comes first," said Ms. Vanessa Tan, Marketing Representative of Best-Betek. "For this bedroom set, we used rubberwood for its structure and its legs are made of high gloss finished dark wenge." Best-Betek offers more than 19 years of upholstered furniture expertise.

Company Name: Best-Betek Furniture Sdn Bhd

Booth: 116, Hall 1, PWTC

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Website: www.bestbetek.com

Mastering Every Piece

Crafted perfectly with an attention to detail, each Decortage item is a masterpiece in its own right. "That's why every year we will only introduce seven to eight newly-designed furniture sets," said Jeffery Choo, Marketing Manager of Shah Alam-based Decortage. This inviting Viena bedroom set is among a handful of choices offered by the 30-plus-year-old solid wood and veneer furniture specialist. The natural beauty of irregular wood grains adds interesting patterns to each Decortage furniture piece. At Decortage, always expect an artful blend of modern and classical style.

Company Name: Decortage Sdn Bhd

Booth: 509, PWTC

Contact Person: Mr. Jeffery Choo

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Email: dctage@streamyx.com

Website: www.decortage.com



A Hand-Crafted, Antique Feel

If your style is classic or traditional, this antique-styled bedroom set by Penang-based furniture producer, Ken Yik, is a must-have. Ken Yik combines the purity of design with the sophisticated execution of its hand-crafted rubberwood headboard and wooden post. "Conventionally, the standard thickness of a wooden post is 55 mm. But for this particular set, each wooden post is 85 mm thick and is hand-crafted individually," explained Terry Ho, Senior Export Executive of Ken Yik, a leading name in the production of epoxy powder coated (EPC) metal furniture. To achieve a stronger bed structure, the base is supported by metal wire mesh.

Company Name: Ken Yik Furniture Industry Sdn Bhd

Booth: 4B12, PWTC

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Wood Grain Beauty

Kinheng's latest addition, the Lucido Kaey bedroom set, calls attention to beautiful variations in grain. "We used true wood [rubberwood] so that we can bring out the natural aesthetic value of wood grain," explained Desmond Lee, Export Manager of Kinheng Furniture. The traditional 3-piece bedroom set livens up any clean and white interiors. As one of the leading furniture experts in Malaysia, this Sungai Buloh-based manufacturer has more than two decades of expertise in producing superior bedroom sets and entertainment units.

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Get Inspired with Inspiwood

Less is more in the case of this Sonata dining set by 14-year-old Penang-based manufacturer Inspiwood Furniture. Equipped with a unique extension system, the dining table is designed with home owners' comfort in mind. "We combined both old and new manufacturing techniques to produce high-quality products," said Mr. Daniel Goh, Export Manager of Inspiwood Furniture. The sleek and streamlined design is made of pure solid rubberwood and chairs are fabric upholstered. And although the set is ergonomically optimised, buyers may mix and match chairs from Inspiwood Furniture's range of other products.

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Furniture for the Four Seasons

Jazz up your living room's atmosphere with this nature-inspired superior Riga living room set by Titov Sdn. Bhd., a marketing division of Sungai Buloh-based manufacturer Kinheng Furniture Sdn Bhd. This three-item set, which consists of a two-sided-compartment coffee table, end table and a cabinet adds a welcoming note to your home. Made of medium-density fibreboard (MDF) and solid wood, the sand movement-inspired patterns would definitely meet the tastes and needs of lifestyle-conscious homeowners. What's more, the product is very durable and highly sought after by buyers in four season countries.

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Fantastic Fabric!

Some of Kintex's high quality outdoor fabrics are entirely composed of a very interesting material: olefin yarn. Imported from Indonesia, this soil- and stain-resistant fabric also is very eco-friendly and 100 percent recyclable. "It is non-irritant to skin, especially to people with sensitive skin," explained Koh Dat Toon, Director of the 37-year-old award-winning upholstery fabric supplier. "Its UV-protective features also enable the fabric to have a shelf life of approximately five years." The ISO 9001:2000-certified manufacturer also offers superior upholstery fabrics imported from Europe and Vietnam.

Company Name: Kintex (KL) Sdn Bhd

Booth: Hall 2, 232, PWTC

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A Bedroom Set with Real Character

Any SHH bedroom set doesn't just sit there; It makes a statement. Bedroom sets exude a sense of Americana—just the right smattering of elegance and warmth at the same time. This 5-piece bedroom set, for instance, with its firm identity, appeals to many homeowners in the United States—SHH's major export market. Produced from poplar solid wood, this bedroom set also incorporates dovetail drawers with full extension glide and beautiful carvings on the headboard to enhance any bedroom interior.

Company Name: SHH Furniture Industries Sdn Bhd

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Get Furniture Sdn Bhd



Chernyen Industries Sdn Bhd



Cheau Sheng Wood-Products Co Ltd



Yang Guang Furniture International Sdn Bhd



Distinctive Fine Furniture Sdn Bhd



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A M-Office Group Industries
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Winner
Chairs System



First Flames Sdn Bhd



Xiang Yi Enterprise Sdn Bhd

Unique Advance Sdn Bhd



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Furniture
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Len Cheong
Furniture Sdn Bhd



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Evergreen Fibreboard Berhad



Yeu Hong Furniture Industries Sdn Bhd



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ELK Furniture Sdn Bhd



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LY Furniture Sdn Bhd



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TrophyRoom



Malaysian Moon Kite Furniture –and Other Local Designs–Take Off

Competition **heats up** to forge Malaysian design identity

By Li Shian Yeo
Furnish Now writer

When is a broom not a broom?

When it is viewed as something beyond a mundane tool used in daily cleaning, said Klaus Kummer, an acclaimed German-born furniture designer who will be the Chief Judge of the 2013 Furniture Design Competition (FDC), organised by the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF).

"As one of the oldest existing tools, brooms are found in every culture," Mr. Kummer said recently during an FDC workshop held in Kuala Lumpur. "Traditionally brooms are all handmade, with each bearing their own unique designs made of native materials."

Citing broom research as one of his favourite pastimes whenever he travels, Mr. Kummer revealed that beautiful patterns and techniques depicting different cultural identities on these tools have contributed to the development of highly functional cleaning devices. What's more exciting, he said, is that the same methodology can be applied to furniture design.

Conventionally, designers are assigned to produce furniture that are functional and useful and that can contribute to the betterment of society. Mr. Kummer, however, hopes to see "something out from Asia that has not been seen before."

While previous furniture designs at MIFF competitions had incorporated various European elements, judges are now eyeing pieces that boast a uniquely Malaysian identity.

When asked to elaborate on the criteria that fit the bill, he explained: "Products created 100 years ago are so beautiful simply because they used natural materials and not plastic. We are now looking for ergonomically-driven and functional pieces that utilise native materials—rubberwood, rattan, local hardwoods or even woven fabrics bearing native patterns—that can be found easily around Malaysia."

More importantly, he added, apart from capturing the essence of Malaysian identity, the design must be able to change the condition of the environment.

"We are the link to the industry," said Mr. Kummer, who also is President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of KDT International Co. Ltd.

While neighbouring countries like China and Vietnam have for some time been the hot favourites in providing the best price and volume for foreign buyers, Malaysia can start building a reputation by offering superior furniture designs.

"MIFF attracted 140 countries to Malaysia again and again and we can only be competitive by offering high quality design," explained MIFF Chairman Dato' Dr. Tan Chin Huat.

This exclusive design workshop was conducted by four industry experts—Mr. Kummer; Tan Ay Zing, Managing Director of TaZ Corporation Sdn. Bhd.; Desmond Lee, Export Manager of Kinheng Furniture Sdn. Bhd.; and Steven Wong, Marketing Director

of BJ Cabinet Enterprise Sdn. Bhd. In the hour-long panel discussion, these experts shared their experiences and insights on the future of the furniture industry with the young participants.

Themed 'Tribute to Colours and Shapes of Malaysia,' MIFF received more than 200 entries. Shortlisted designs will be matched with local manufacturers to produce prototypes for the final judging on March 4, 2013.

Suhana Mohamed, a lecturer from Selangor-based ALFA International College, led an entourage of five participants to this year's event. According to Ms. Mohamed, this is her students' second participation in a MIFF design competition. Last year, her students managed to secure a spot in the semi-finals.

"This year my students are starting their preparation early," Ms. Mohamed said.

Emphasising on the importance of 'less is more' and easy-to-manufacture techniques, she revealed that her students will showcase an array of designs inspired by Wau Bulan (or Malaysian moon kite) and Nyonya hand fans to wow the judges.

Another lecturer, Mat Rasul Sidek from the Faculty of Design and Architecture (FRSB) of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), arrived at the workshop along with 17 final year students and lecturers. He pointed out that the competition is a great platform to jump-start young talents' career in furniture designing.

YOUNGSTERS GET REAL ABOUT DESIGN; COMMERCIALLY REAL



TrophyRoom

By Li Shian Yeo
Furnish Now writer

*Better designs from
the youth this year*



*MIFF-FDC gets underway with youthful vigor and improved designs.
Judges are impressed with standards of Asian entries this year*

Judges of a new Malaysian furniture design competition recently shortlisted 10 designs, and also rendered an early verdict on overall standards.

"The submitted design standards are reasonably high for Asian context," said Klaus Kummer, the chief judge of the 2013 Malaysian International Furniture Fair's Furniture Design Competition (MIFF-FDC). "Overall, the presentations are good, clear and easy to understand."

According to Mr. Kummer, a Bangkok-based internationally recognised furniture designer, it was in an easy selection process.

Unlike entries in a previous MIFF competition that offered nothing beyond a concept, Mr. Kummer said the submitted entries this year are "more realistic and commercially feasible."

This year, MIFF received a total of 187 entries under its young talent category. Among the 10 shortlisted designs are

Congkak-inspired seats, a Ketupat-inspired coffee table, a fish trap-inspired hanging shelf, a Gendang stool and a rattan-woven high stool that can be potentially used as a lamp as well.

So the good news is that judges suggested there was a 30 percent quality improvement over submitted designs in the previous year.

The focus of MIFF-FDC will therefore remain on young designers—the generation that should in fact be delivering on new design innovation and ideas—thanks to a little help from MIFF and constructive critiquing by judges.

For Guangdong-based Malaysian designer Philip Yap, the exclusive competition is definitely a good platform to mould young designers into the commercial world.

"Actually, I am pretty impressed," said Mr. Yap, a regular judge for the China

International Furniture Fair (Guangzhou) who participated in MIFF-FDC for the first time. "Some ideas are so pure that we, senior designers, have lost [them] during the way."

In order to encourage contestants to stretch beyond their limits, MIFF did not confine criterion to a specific sort of furniture piece, said Dato' Dr. Tan Chin Huat, MIFF Chairman.

Shortlisted designs will be matched with local manufacturers to produce prototypes for the final judging on March 4, 2013. The winner of the young talent category will receive RM10,000 (about US\$3,256), and second and third place will receive RM5,000 (about US\$1,628) and RM2,500 (about US\$814), respectively.

Judging has been strict thus far. Contestants are being judged on their level of originality, creativity, functionality and aesthetic values.

Step Up TO BETTER LANGUAGE

By Chan Li Jin
Furnish Now writer

MIFF donates RM30,000 to *Step Up*, *The Star*'s education pullout in support of language and education development

It is often said that there is more joy in giving than receiving, and this is even more true when the gift is not in the form of a tangible present but one with life-changing potential.

For that reason, United Business Media (M) Sdn. Bhd., the organiser of the Malaysian International Furniture Fair effective 2012, donated RM30,000 (US\$9,767) in October to distribute the dual-language pullout *Step Up* to rural schools.

"Education and language have the capacity to change the lives of people," said Dato' Dr. Tan Chin Huat, chairman of MIFF, at the cheque-presentation ceremony that was conducted at UBM headquarters in Malaysia. "This is the second year we are sponsoring this programme, because of the good response we received last year."

Step Up is published fortnightly and distributed to 1,200 Chinese vernacular schools nationwide. Schools in rural areas such as east coast states, those located in interiors districts such as Bentong, and those from East Malaysia find them particularly useful, considering the lack of good educational materials in those areas.

Dato' Tan added that he found the pullout to be very beneficial for teachers too, as it can help them save time to prepare educational materials for their students. With the rapid speed of development today, Dato' Tan feels the urgent need to invest in children's education so that they will not be left behind.



Datuk Wong Sai Wan (left) with Dato' Dr. Tan Chin Huat (right)

"Our students need to keep up with changing trends and position themselves in changing societies," Dato' Tan said. "I've been in business for a long time. In the last 40 years, I've travelled to many countries and I can see how other countries also focus on education to change the lives of people. China is one good example."

He bemoans the fact that children with good grades are usually the ones who get the most attention from teachers, while the ones who suffer academically are left out.

"This should not be the case," added Dato' Tan. "Good education should be available for all, not only the privileged people."

Datuk Wong Sai Wan, Executive Editor of *The Star*, who was present to receive the mock cheque, divulged that 60% of students from Chinese schools do not go beyond secondary school education because of language restraints. One in four students also do not sit for their SPM (Sijil Penilaian Malaysia) examinations due to academic limitations.

Apart from the pullout, the *Step Up* education programme also conducts workshops for teachers to keep them

updated with the constantly changing syllabus.

"I started learning English only at Standard Four [grade], but I think my English is stronger than many young people nowadays," Dato' Tan said. "The way they teach grammar now is different; I think the old way is better."

With excessive emphasis placed on examination subjects such as math and science, many schools have scrapped lessons such as music, physical exercise and art that make up wholesome education. As a result, language development also has suffered because teachers are not motivated to teach beyond the national syllabus.

Dato' Tan considers the contribution to the *Step Up* fund to be relatively modest, but believes in contributing to positive change in society by any means possible.

"We all need to contribute to the children of today, because they could become our future workers," Dato' Tan said. "If we don't give them the fundamentals today, we will all suffer the consequences in the future."

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How to Hoot at the Moon in Kuala Lumpur

By Olive Ong
Furnish Now writer

FOR ALL YOU MIFF NIGHT OWLS, HERE IS YOUR GUIDE TO GOING OUT

Kuala Lumpur or KL, as us Malaysian calls the city, is as cosmopolitan and as diverse as New York City or even Singapore. Food, fashion or fun, KL will not let you down! In fact, the best part about the city is that it never really sleeps. In KL's Golden Triangle where businesses and meetings thrive during the day, fun takes over when the sun sets. A visit to KL is not complete without a peek into its terrific nightlife especially around the Bukit Bintang area and Jalan Ampang too. Let's start (and since we're limited on space, just Google anyplace here to get more info).

Food, glorious food!

Lot 10 Hutong

If you're looking for local favourites in comfortable environs instead of one by the roadside, then Lot 10 Hutong is the place to go. In most Malaysian malls, food courts are a staple but Lot 10 Hutong is a truly refreshing change. Here, you will find the best of KL's hawker food including the famous Ho Weng Kee wan tan noodles, Kim Lian Kee Hokkien noodles and Mo Sang Kor Bak Kut Teh. Some of these signature dishes have been around for decades!



Jalan Alor

Not too long ago, Jalan Alor was the infamous red light district in the heart of KL. Today it is a food haven for locals and tourists. Jalan Alor serves up some of the best Malaysian hawker fare and the street comes alive at night as it heaves with delicious aroma, boisterous laughs and bright fluorescent lights. Choices are aplenty but must-try includes the famous grilled chicken wings from Wong Ah Wah Restaurant, grilled stingray from Meng Kee Grill Fish and claypot kung po (dried chilli) frog at the Frog Porridge hawker stall.



Just perpendicular to Jalan Alor is Changkat Bukit Bintang, possibly the hottest strip in town right now with its chic eateries and trendy clubs and pubs, all housed in charming colonial buildings. Here are some fine dining spots you should check out....

- **twenty.one kitchen+bar,**

Sleek and seductive, twentyone kitchen+bar serves a brilliant blend of modern European and Asian cuisine. Try their beef burger or opt for fusion-Thai green risotto with spicy chicken and tempura spring onions. Also a bar and club, the cocktails here are said to be among the best in town. Chill out upstairs on the balcony with a drink in hand and watch the fashionable folks party the night away.

- **Werner's on Changkat**

Another upscale European-style restaurant is Werner's. Located in a quaint double-storey bungalow, Werner's plays on the old world charm of the 1940s with its black décor downstairs while upstairs, it goes contemporary, transforming itself into a stylish club lounge. Its intimate setting with ample al fresco seating makes for a wonderful ambiance as you dig into speciality pasta.



Frangipani Restaurant & Bar

Here is one French fine dining spot that is still going strong and should not be missed. Frangi's art deco façade with the water feature in the middle of its dining room is at once elegant and sophisticated, a perfect match to its excellent cuisine.

Go shopping!

Sungei Wang Plaza

One of KL's oldest malls, Sungei Wang is the place to go for the latest gadgets if you are on a wallet-friendly budget (well, apart from Low Yat Plaza). A star attraction with Malaysians and tourists alike, it is the unique mix of tenants here that pulls in the crowd. Discover its specialty shops, which include tattoo parlours and tailors, while the 6th floor is dedicated to Malaysian designers. This huge mall has more than 800 retail outlets, which can be a confusing maze but it is worth exploring for that unexpected buy.

Chinatown

Petaling Street and the area surrounding it is also known as Kuala Lumpur's Chinatown and this is where you go for cheap bargains! This open-air market is great to visit at night for its loud and vibrant atmosphere. The street is closed so the only gridlock you will have to face is people from all walks of life. For the best price, don't forget to bargain but do note the stalls here sell imitation wallets, handbags, watches, shoes, clothes and souvenirs. If you are not interested in "Rolex" or "Ray-Ban," try the local fruits and desserts. There are many little food stalls that dot this stretch of street. If you get tired of shopping and sightseeing, stop at one of the many seafood restaurants for dinner and beer!



Suria KLCC

Suria KLCC is more than your average shopping mall. Hot designer labels, check. Departmental stores, check. Dining outlets, electronics and gadgets, all check! But what's best about this mall are other attractions such as the KLCC Park, the Petronas Art Gallery and the Dewan Philharmonik Petronas, a music hall that has hosted to some of the world's top orchestras.

Pavilion

Swanky Pavilion is home to high-end brands such as Hermès, Bottega Veneta and Yves Saint Laurent. While it caters mostly to the upper class, Pavilion also has a fine mix of high-street brands and local labels. If fashion is not your game, head up to Level 6 where you will find a trendy selection of home décor and furnishings stores. Before you leave, don't forget to check out the mall's most spectacular feature: the Spanish Steps at the main entrance.

Clubbing, drinks and more!

Zouk Club KL

True clubbers should not miss Zouk Club KL, strategically located at Jalan Ampang. Its modern design paired with state-of-the-art lighting and sound systems makes for a complete clubbing experience, igniting all your senses! Local and award-winning international DJs play here with music ranging from house to R&B to electro and a whole lot more. There are six distinctive rooms to choose from: Zouk, Velvet Underground, Barsonic, Phuture, Aristo and Terrace Bar. A hit with trendsetters, socialites and your everyday clubber, Zouk is definitely the throbbing heart of KL's nightlife.



Rootz Dance Club, Lot 10

Who doesn't like a party on the roof? Well, no one does it better than Rootz. Located on Lot 10 Rooftop, the club's interiors are opulent in true baroque style, inspired by the great Russian museums and palaces. Extravagant is an understatement. The club features the best local acts and international DJs. Plus with one of the largest champagne collections, Rootz has definitely elevated the clubbing standard in town.



SkyBar, Traders Hotel

Imagine sipping on your drink as you soak in the fantastic backdrop that is the Petronas Twin Towers. In fact, it's so close you can almost touch it! For this utterly intoxicating experience, SkyBar is the place to go. Its location is unrivalled. Situated on Level 33 of Traders Hotel and within the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur City Centre, this is the perfect spot to unwind and chill after a long day! Contemporary, cosmopolitan and chic, with a pool to boot, SkyBar has an extensive cocktail and wine list to cap your night.

VIEW Rooftop Bar, GTower

Nestled at the top of GTower, the VIEW is poised to be another superstar rooftop bar and definitely a coveted destination for sophisticated set. The view from this high up includes the nearby Petronas Twin Towers and the nightlights from Ampang Hills and the Titiwangsa mountain range. Drinks include custom-designed ABSOLUT signature cocktails created by award-winning mixologists.

The bottom line: KL is for night owls of all varieties. So howl at the moon in a raging club, or just hoot at it over local cuisine. The city is completely at your beck and call.





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