

MALAYSIAN
INTERNATIONAL



FURNITURE
FAIR

furnis now

The official magazine of the
Malaysian International Furniture Fair

DECEMBER
2013

MAKEOVER

KINHENG FURNITURE BREATHES LIFE INTO **BEDROOM SETS**

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Elvis's Chef
*Now Designs Restaurants
in Malaysia*

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**FABULOUS
FURNITURE**

Appearing At
**MIFF
2014**

- Page 16



MIFF 2014:

A Bigger & Better-Than-Ever Show

Next year marks the 20th anniversary of the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF), so you can be sure the show will be a great one.

At MIFF 2014, we are expecting even more exhibitors from Malaysia's traditional furniture town—Muar—to join. That means the total number of exhibitors also will increase between 5 and 10 percent.

We are expecting exhibitors to take their offerings to a new level. They not only are realising the importance of new products for MIFF 2014, they also are being more observant of global furniture trends.

We have heard that some exhibitors are not content to offer European-style furniture. Rather, some are becoming even more sensitive to specific national marketplaces, developing enthusiasm for Scandinavian-style furniture, for example.

Buyers' Night at MIFF 2014 is sure to be a hit. We are calling it "Fantastic 20," based on our anniversary year. If you are a buyer who has been with us since the beginning, feel free to nominate yourself to win a reserve seat at Buyers' Night. Contact Kelie at kelie.lim@ubm.com about the following:

1) What year you started attending MIFF and 2) You would like a reserve seat at Buyers' Night. Kelie likes MIFF pictures too, so if you have some from your experience, email them (although they're not required)!

Meanwhile, in this special pre-show issue of *Furnish Now*, we have a lot to share with you. Kinheng Furniture took up our challenge to transform a furniture set from good to great through the use of stunning photography and special interior design work. Kinheng Furniture embodies what it means to take exhibitor offerings to the next level, and for that, we thank this pioneering Malaysian company.

Observe more on offer at MIFF 2014 from our exhibitors in the magazine's Fabulous Furniture section.

We also have a special article on Johorian expatriate chef, Hans Durst, who has some great stories to tell about meeting legendary entertainers Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley. Chef Durst is a world-class gentleman using the finest ingredients in Italian cooking and Malaysian furniture at his restaurant chains in southern Malaysia.





At MIFF, we're no one-trick pony. We are constantly thinking how to serve our buyers and exhibitors better, and we look forward to the fruits of that at MIFF 2014. Enjoy the show!

Best Wishes,

KAREN GOI,
GENERAL MANAGER,

FURNITURE & INTERIORS,
UBM MALAYSIA

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furnish now

The official magazine of the Malaysian International Furniture Fair

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Elvis's Chef Builds Restaurant Empire

in Malaysia

By Matt Young
Furnish Now editor

In full uniform and makeup, ready to sing, Elvis Presley put his hand on Chef Hans Durst and said, "I'll follow you now." Elvis was trying to avoid the crowd of 3,000 people that had gathered on the street outside the hotel restaurant. Mr. Durst led Elvis through the kitchen garbage room and out the back door three nights in a row, just like that. Elvis is gone, but Chef Durst remains, cooking up new restaurants in Malaysia.

Photo credit:
Nguyen Hong Hanh

In the little-known Malaysian city of Johor Bahru, there lives a chef who has fed Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra and U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Telling all these tales wouldn't leave enough room to tell the story of Mr. Durst himself, so suffice it to say Sinatra was a total class act, Elvis was a wild man and President Johnson screamed a lot (not at Mr. Durst, who stood nearby serving the president sandwiches in a Houston hotel).

"In this profession, you go worldwide as a chef," Mr. Durst explained.

Mr. Durst has indeed, holding a range of top culinary positions—like executive chef and general manager of F&B—for corporate groups like Hyatt hotels in Chicago, Singapore and Melbourne.

Spotting an opportunity in Malaysia's south, first with an ice cream parlour, Mr. Durst set to work building a small empire. Among these are two Gianni's Trattoria restaurants—which serve Italian cuisine—and another Mediterranean-style eatery called Sweetwater.

Given Mr. Durst's vast, global restaurant experience, try to imagine what it's like to taste his chicken breast on steamy risotto, his garlic spinach, or his cheesecake. That's not to say Mr. Durst invents all his recipes, but he knows what is delicious on a plate.

Just having opened the second Gianni's this year, Mr. Durst spoke about the local Malaysian elements that supported his vision of the restaurant, and really supported his empire to date.

"Mostly what you see here is Johorian," Mr. Durst said. "Even with the marble, I went to the marble factory, picked this slab and had them cut it. And the iron was done by a local guy who does fancy iron for the table legs."

Ofentimes, Mr. Durst buys furniture for his restaurants from the same Malaysian manufacturers that export overseas.

"It's inexpensive, and the quality is quite good," Mr. Durst said. "I originally had a strait leg [for my chairs]. I didn't like that myself even though I wanted that. I said, give me a curved leg instead."

That was done to Mr. Durst's satisfaction.



“ In this profession, you go worldwide as a chef.

”

- Chef Hans Durst



“Back in 1996 was the first time I bought chairs for my restaurants here,” Mr. Durst said. “Those chairs were made in Muar and lasted a long time. ”

Perhaps the most difficult furniture pieces to obtain were Gianni’s sofas.

“All the sofas for your house have arm supports,” Mr. Durst said.

But Mr. Durst didn’t want arm supports on his restaurant sofas—

something that had to be customised by local Malaysians, which was well done.

“People are drawn to these sofas [when they come to eat],” Mr. Durst said. “If you have a family, that’s even more the case.”

Those chairs lasted as long as the restaurant did—8 years, an excellent lifespan for restaurant chairs that different people constantly are using, Mr. Durst said. They only had to be

reupholstered once, he said.

Mr. Durst, who declined to state his age, didn’t have to. At the end of the day he stands for this: timeless international quality and taste. And he’s perfectly able to be himself and do what he does best in Johor, thanks to supportive local manufacturers producing export-quality work and appreciative customers.



Tasteful designs at tasty Gianni’s Trattoria



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smile of the night



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The Difference Is Like

By Alexandra Wong
Furnish Now writer

It's rare to find companies with the vision and courage to try new things, especially if they already are successful. But it's the willingness to evolve that has transformed Kinheng Furniture from a small local furniture-maker into a million-dollar empire that exports to some of the world's biggest furniture markets. The company extends this forward-thinking mentality to its new image makeover, in line with a key theme of MIFF 2014, "Living Furniture, Leading Design."

Night & Day



Kinheng Furniture's new bedroom sets get a makeover, and tell a story of modern living. Read the short story on page 10, and follow the related photo story featuring Kinheng's furniture.

Many of Malaysia's most successful furniture companies had humble, determined beginnings, but perhaps nobody has worked harder than the founder of Kinheng Furniture Sdn Bhd.

Chai Kin Pheng is said to have spent part of his wedding day at the factory. Even today, employees know him as a man who regularly eats at the company restaurant and comes to work daily.

Mr. Chai hasn't changed much, but looking at Kinheng today, past and present are as different as day and night. From a 5,000 square-foot factory that was little more than a workshop, Kinheng has expanded into an empire with a factory area of 150,000

square feet that exports to the world's major furniture markets.

How did it get there? Mr. Chai attributes his company's success to an appetite for risk that is matched by his thirst for growth.

"I became a boss because that's the way to earn money," Mr. Chai said. "I started out with TV cabinets for the domestic market because it was a niche segment, so we'd face less competition. But I knew that in order to grow, we couldn't stay complacent. You have to take risks sometimes. It's all part of growing a business."

Behind Mr. Chai's straight-talking, down-to-earth persona is a razor-sharp mind that

is constantly planning and strategizing. Immediately after his first participation in MIFF 1996, Mr. Chai began manufacturing bedroom furniture to penetrate the lucrative export market. In the days when the furniture market was dominated by manufacturers copying the most popular designs, Mr. Chai took on the challenge of being an early adopter of design innovation. Today, Kinheng is billed as one of Malaysia's most exciting furniture brands for pioneering cutting-edge designs and introducing new materials into products.

Photos continued on page 10

Article continued on page 11

Creative Direction by Victor Khoo

Photography by Dwayne Foong

JILL & JACK, OPPOSITES WHO ATTRACT

Jill and Jack are as different as night and day. Jill is a self-employed designer and artist who spends her days painting in her home studio (when she's not out shopping or trying to "save the dolphins"). Jack is a performance-driven marketing manager for a multinational corporation. Their coupling is a clear case of yin wanting yang. Jill's sunny, free-spirited nature is a refreshing change from the usual corporate types that Jack meets at work and gives him a chance to unleash his inner romantic as well. On the other hand, Jill is fascinated by the urban, sophisticated world that Jack has initiated her into. Jill and Jack, a modern love story inspired by classic attraction.



7:30am

Jill awakes and peers past her pillow—it's morning again.



7:33am

"What's this?" Jill wonders. A little puzzling message that says, "Eat my love..."



7:45am

That yellow notepad path Jack made is so cute.



7:34am

"I must be dreaming," Jill thinks. "Jack is really becoming a delicious romantic."



8:06am

Jill starts her day with a new dress that's hip and totally her.



She's meeting up with her liberal friends later for lunch.

8:07am



8:10am

Even a bohemian like Jill appreciates mirror-mirror-on-the-wall.

Continued from page 9

Now in its 20th year, Kinheng is raising its game again in the run-up to MIFF 2014.

With intensifying competition, especially giants like China in the game, the company realised that to continue staying ahead of the pack, it had to go beyond thinking about getting that sale tomorrow.

"We took a hard look at our database and realised our customer profile has changed," Mr. Chai said. "While our original customers were still with us, now our clientele included their children as well. Obviously, what the younger generations look for is different from their forefathers. Ten years ago, when we started doing bedroom sets, the demand was for classic, big designs. But now, more and more people are staying in condos and apartments with smaller living spaces. So the kind of furniture, too, has to adapt to this change."



8:16am

Just about ready to leave.



8:20am

"That Jack and his breakfast tray," Jill thinks. "Wait until he sees me tonight."



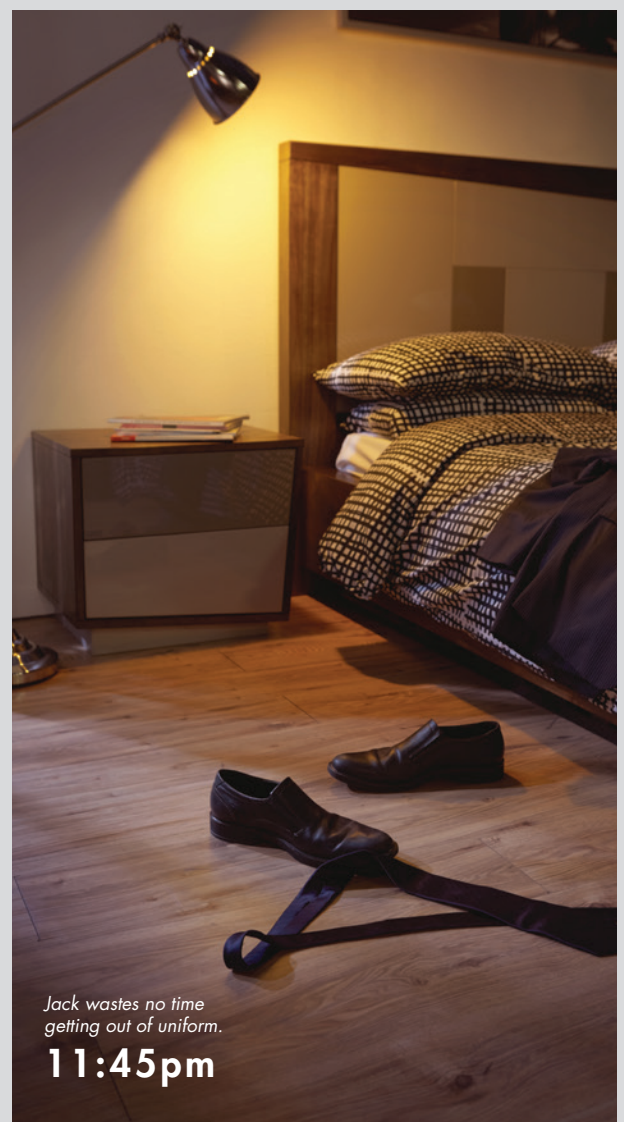
11:43pm

Jack gets back home and finds a mysterious message.



11:44pm

Wow, Jill is here. What a sweetheart.



Jack wastes no time getting out of uniform.

11:45pm

Kinheng was, in fact, already producing furniture for this new, more compact generation. To make sure the message was getting out there, Kinheng embarked on a branding exercise that would reflect these changes.

A new series of furniture photos featuring Kinheng's two latest bedroom collections are distinctly different from traditional furniture images. Rather than emphasising the furniture's selling points—as traditional images tend to do—the photography draws you deeper into the storyline that is built around the inhabitants of the featured bedroom sets. Their faces are never shown; smartly placed props imply that they belong to a man and woman who are in a relationship. Photographs of a breakfast consumed, candlelit rooms and intimate lovers' messages form a composite picture of a worldly and passionate couple who are clearly enjoying the lifestyle—and living space—that they have.

A series of pictures show the room at different times of the day, each one subtly different to convey movement and authenticity. You get the sense that actual people live here, which is precisely Kinheng's intention.



11:46pm

Jill's love path of rose petals have Jack on the run.



11:47pm

Jack stops for a second to take in the view and the life.

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"We wanted the images to convey a taste of real living," marketing manager Desmond Lee stressed. "In order to work, the images must contain elements that our customers can relate to, elements that are drawn from their own life."

The result is an image series that is rich in colour and vivid in detail, intimate, stylish and believable. More importantly, it sends out a powerful message: by linking the brand with a desirable lifestyle, it implies that by proxy, life is more desirable with Kinheng's products.



11:48pm

Jack knows he'll follow Jill's path, living happily in the moment.



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Hall 1 Booth 123



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Hall 1
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“Rearranging furniture, adding some candles, or making even small tweaks can really *make the difference.*”

- Anthea Turner, media personality



1



2

1. TV Cabinet of the Future

This great wall cabinet combination provides storage for your TV, and so much more. Solve all your storage needs with this great piece, featuring melamine surface finishing and tempered glass.

2. The Awesome Bed

As a kid, you probably never had the chance to sleep in anything like this. Fortunately for today's little ones, this all-in-one concept—playful and super fun—is available. Bed, wardrobe, chest drawers, secret storage space and study desk are all included!

Nan Ya Furniture Industrial



BJ CABINET ENTERPRISE

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LB Furniture



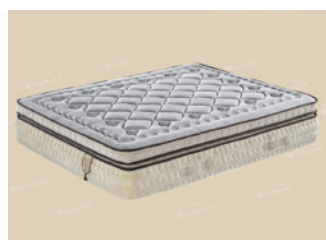
Len Cheong Furniture



Lifestyle International



Gamma Wood



Foshan Keyun Furniture



Zin Tiau Furniture



Yee Guan Furniture Manufacturing



Zoom Off To Dreamland

Rush your kids off to dreamland in this stylist High Speed Car Bed by Muar-based children's furniture expert Kids House Factory. The medium-density fibreboard (MDF) bed, which is equipped with a built-in LED light and sound system, also is compliant with international safety standards. It also comes with a coin-sized remote control that enables 30-foot radius control of the light and sound system.

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VS Office Furniture Industries



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Reaim Furniture



Merry Yard International



Artak Design

Procasa Industries



Zhao Fong Marketing



Reliable Trend



Lip Gee

“ My favorite piece of furniture is my bed, ‘cause



Zenith Projects Technology



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 tranquility 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.

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HD Furniture Industries



Tay Huah Furniture



Cosmine



Inception Design & Trading



Lifestyle Holdings



Sim Hup Seng Furniture



Synway Furniture Industries

it's *fluffy and so comfortable!* ”

Vivica A. Fox, actress



Joy to the World

It's not right when kids grow up in a colourless world. Adding cheer to the bedroom is great for kids, supporting their creative and imaginative minds. Hence, MG furniture aims to bolster young minds with creative and innovative designs sure to delight any child. These pieces are comfortable and functional as well, said chief designer Joanne See Toh. The rock-solid structure keeps both children and parents happy.

MG FURNITURE

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Shining Bright Like a Diamond

This bedroom set exudes luxurious comfort, featuring deep crystal button details and generous padding. Simply perfect for regal relaxing! The bed is finished off with chrome effect legs that give it a wow factor. Meanwhile, the stylish frame is beautifully upholstered support.

BEST BETECK FURNITURE

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In Search Of...

Are you in search of a non-static children's bedroom created by safe, fun and multifunctional furniture? Are you in search of a creative, exciting way to advance child development? Or maybe you're just in search of a reliable supplier using new production technology—namely UV digital printing and PVC wrapping techniques. Eastern Smart Furniture specialises in meeting these search needs and more, creating exclusive designs that combine unique character, function, comfort and quality.

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Chia Chi Ya



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Soon Her Sing Industries

“ I also have *intense relationships* with furniture... probably because we practically had none when I was growing up. ”

- Barbra Streisand, singer



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Freyheim International



Timeless Eye Candy

Candy-coloured furniture pieces like G-Pacific's Windsor chairs bring excitement to any home space. These delightful chairs are made of fungus-and-insect-resistant rubberwood. Each piece is crafted with a smooth surface, yet finished with the colour vibrancy of an oil painting. Any dull interior will be immediately enhanced with these environmentally friendly pieces that exude hints of vintage glamour.

G-PACIFIC ENTERPRISE

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“ I’ve owned *more sofas* than I’ve had husbands. ”

- Janet Street-Porter, broadcaster



Benithem



Amigatech



Master Minimalist

Penang-based manufacturer Delano Furniture Industries is a master minimalist. Aesthetically modern with distinctive variations in grain, this particle-and-MDF board bedroom set is distinguished by its frame-like design. “This set is inspired by our customer’s request for a budget constrained three-dimensional bedroom design,” explained Venus Lim, marketing executive of the 13-year-old company.

DELANO FURNITURE INDUSTRIES

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Digital Furniture



Distinctive Fine Furniture



ELK Furniture Industries



Euro Chairs Manufacturer



Foshan Niao Furniture



The Manhattan Experience

The Margaret nine-piece dining set comfortably sits eight people in rich, traditional styling. This elegant dining set is constructed from solid rubberwood in a walnut finish that exudes its warm character. The dining table is a perfect combination of fluted legs, scalloped apron and Manhattan-style top, giving it an heirloom look. Dining chairs come with optional armrests, padded and upholstered seating. The Margaret is sure to give your dining space a classy, rustic look.

RIAN HENG WOODEN FURNITURE INDUSTRIES

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Jemaramas Jaya

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SMT STONE WORLD

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Cute & Comfy

Xiang Yi's latest dining set is designed for maximum comfort and comes with an extension mechanism. This is a ready-to-assemble dining set made with solid rubberwood. It fits right into any space-constrained modern home and pretty much speaks for itself. It's absolutely delightful. Backed by more than 15 years of experience, Xiang Yi is committed to comfort and craftsmanship.

XIANG YI ENTERPRISE

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Shuter Enterprise



Deep Furniture



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Sweet Home Concept



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Chuan Lin Wang

School of Acting: furniture.

- Danny Bonaduce, comedian



Every Day is a Holiday

Dreaming of a Western holiday? The good news is, with Decortage's bedroom set, you no longer need to cross continents to enjoy one. Decortage's latest offering makes modern and rustic furniture virtually indistinguishable. Combining thick, natural wood with contemporary design, the feeling of real, organic wood transports one to a Western bedroom setting. Coming home has never felt happier.

DECORTAGE

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Contemporary Vision

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OMEGA SOFA

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Lumini Sofa Manufacturing



Hin Lim Furniture Manufacturer



Mixbox Furniture Industries



Latitude Tree Furniture



Seng Yip Furniture



Seow Buck Sen Furniture



Sern Kou Furniture Industries



Sin Heng Furniture Industries



“
I’m drawn to furniture design as *complete architecture* on a minor scale.
”

- Brad Pitt, actor

Affordable Design Trends

Décor Trend focuses on identifying inspirational design trends and making its own designs in affordable, ready-to-assemble (RTA) panel furniture. Décor Trend takes pride in its designs, as well as the wide choice of finishes and material used, to cater to each country the company services.

The Julia Bedroom series has been developed based on European lifestyle furniture designs that are traditionally made of solid wood.

The Julia series has a 3D-textured finish, which gives the appearance and feel of a veneer product, but with the cost benefits of a paper laminate. There is a wide selection of colours that can be chosen as well as choice of E1 or E2 particle board panel construction.

Décor Trend’s focus on delivering quality products at affordable prices is supported by its ISO 9001 accreditation, as well as the high level of investment the company has made in German machinery, providing efficient and flexible manufacturing capabilities.

The Julia, as well as other designs, can be modified to suit any particular specification needs you may have—not only in design and finishes, but also in the carton packaging (standard or mail-order packaging).

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Shopping for Décor in Kuala Lumpur

By Olive Ong
Furnish Now writer

The West goes for the rich Asian tapestry, while the East fancies style with a Western flair; How can one explain that?

Well, some things aren't meant to be explained, but rather enjoyed.

Enjoy we do, in Kuala Lumpur. The city plays host to home décor stores that carry a fine selection from the world over. As locals and expatriates have their own preferences, the city is never short of outlets catering to every hearts' desire. Here we take a quick look at some of the homegrown and international brands located in malls around town.

Ambiance



Bird cages, lanterns and even giant ink brushes are great details to add that romantic element to any room

Bangsar Shopping Centre

Located in posh Bangsar, this mall's offering is equally as classy with big names in furnishing and décor such as Janine, Gudang, Noritake and BoConcept. There are hidden gems too such as Modern Primitive that focuses on furniture, all of which are exceptional pieces that bring out the beauty of raw wood. Over at Maison Curio, you will find an eclectic range of exquisite pieces inspired by Parisian homes. From hand-crafted parrot porcelain wall candelabra to vintage-inspired photo frames, lovers of the French décor style will be swooning. Also not to be missed is the funky Asian-themed Ambiance. This quaint store is filled to the brim with treasures from around the region. Think *mahjong sets*, *Fu* dogs, jewellery boxes, urns and more. Anyone with a fascination for anything Chinoiserie will be thrilled to set foot in here.

Maison
Curio



Get Frenchy at
Maison Curio

Outdated

It's all about vintage love at Outdated, from antique luggage and trunks to toys and cash registers, these beauties from the past are a sight to behold and own



Publika

Artsy mall Publika (which is also very near MECC) is perhaps the latest place to be for the hip and trendy. Art installations can be found around the mall, making this a favourite hangout spot for the creative folks. You can be sure that the selection of stores here are a little different from the norm, like Outdated. Seekers of all things antique and vintage must pop by this place! For a piece of "recycled" history and Malaysian heritage, the finds here truly are exceptional. Pieces are sourced locally, and top selections include a jukebox, pinball machine, barber chair and 1960s turntable, among others. Outdated also features works by young local artists and designers. As their tagline goes, it's freshly old!

The Gardens Mall



Sleek and contemporary, The Gardens is home to many high-end home-furnishing outlets

Mid Valley Megamall & The Gardens Mall

If you're into feng shui, then look no further. The World of Feng Shui in Mid Valley is your one-stop centre for all your needs. For those into grandfather clocks or cuckoo clocks, stop by Siew Cheong Clocks. Here time stands still, thanks to all-time classics. When you're done browsing here, you can opt to head over to The Gardens. This mall is home to Royal Selangor, Ovas, Pasaya, Wei-ling Gallery and more. For a wide range (and almost complete selection) of home décor and furnishings, then it has to be iwannagohome! With its fine mix of accessories, tableware, kitchen accessories, art and sculpture, choices are aplenty and many make for fine gifts for your home and that of loved ones.



iwanna gohome

Art and figurines like these can help dress up homes instantly

“The purpose of *art* is washing the dust of daily life off *our souls*.”

- Pablo Picasso, painter

Ode To Art

One of Qin Feng's paintings from the Series Desire Scenery, #015, available at Ode To Art



The sophisticated Ode To Art's space in Pavilion

Pavilion Kuala Lumpur

Level 6 of Pavilion is dedicated to a huge array of home décor, furnishing and furniture outlets. Ode To Art, in particular, caters to art enthusiasts. Featuring contemporary Asian and international works, from paintings to sculptures, this gallery has an extensive and diverse portfolio with art consultancy services. Check out the bold works of modernist ink painter Qin Feng, whose ethereal masterpieces are poetically calming. Then, pop by Molecule for essential pieces including modern lighting, contemporary clocks and even glamorous wall art.



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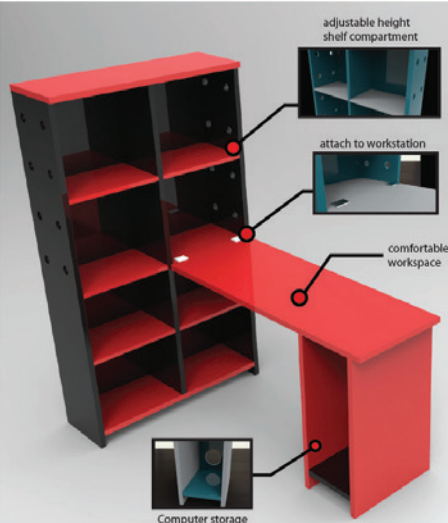
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Expect More Exhibitors at MIFF from *Malaysia's* Furniture Town

By Yeo Li Shian
Furnish Now writer



Image of Muar, Malaysia
Photo credit: Tuah Roslan

“We are *very happy* with the collaboration with a *global organiser like UBM*”

- Neo Chee Kiat, President of MFA



The Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) has been a popular destination in Asia during March every year, with no shortage of enthusiastic trade visitors. Making its first debut at the Kuala Lumpur-based Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) in 1995, the industry trade show has seen and tasted two decades of fruitful progress.

As it celebrates its 20th anniversary, MIFF 2014 promises more exciting offerings—notably from an estimated 30 percent increase in its Muar-based furniture producers' participation.

“We are delighted to welcome more exhibitors from Muar,” said Karen Goi, General Manager, Furniture & Interiors, UBM Malaysia. “This is a very positive outcome from our strategic alliance with the Muar Furniture Association (MFA).”

Muar—the furniture haven of Malaysia—has long been associated with the booming furniture business. Widely known for its world-class exporters, this northwestern region of Johor alone has 700 furniture manufacturing companies and raked in a whopping 45 percent of Malaysia's RM8 billion worth of furniture exports last year.

Gearing up under MFA, one of the country's strongest and most prominent industry groups, the increase in participation is expected to benefit trade visitors directly as they will be spoilt with more buying choices, value and additional business contacts.

The hike in the number of MFA's participants was due to the successful debut of MFA Hall, with 80 participating companies at MIFF 2013. In fact, the launch of the MFA Hall nearly doubled the presence of Muar exhibitors at MIFF from previously.

MFA has since stepped up its game by forging a strategic alliance with the organiser, UBM Asia, to participate exclusively in MIFF. The decision also has resulted in significant market advantages for both, and further strengthened MIFF's position as Southeast Asia's foremost industry trade show.

Neo Chee Kiat, President of MFA, expressed his gratitude over the partnership with UBM.

“We are very happy with the collaboration with a global organiser like UBM,” he said. “MIFF 2013 enables us to sell our products to more countries and to be approached by buyers from small emerging markets that are willing to pay for quality products.”

He further added that on the association's wish list is a bigger hall in the next exhibition in order to accommodate higher participation due to the excellent response.

Ranked as a global Top 10 industry event, the multi-award winning MIFF works hand-in-hand with various local and international furniture giants, offering a plethora of eye-catching furniture designs and concepts.

MIFF's credentials are bolstered by its business success. It has taken on huge effort and carved out for itself a healthy niche, generating whopping sales of US\$854 million in 2013, up by US\$24 million from 2012.

The five-day fair garnered more than 500 manufacturers or exporters in 2013, having come a long way from its launch in 1995. MIFF 2013 also attracted a total of 6,054 international buyers from 140 countries with a good turnout of quality buyers from emerging regions and traditional markets like Australia, United States and Japan.

The 20th edition of the fair, MIFF 2014, will again be held at the downtown Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) and Matrade Exhibition & Convention Centre (MECC), Kuala Lumpur, covering a total of 80,000 square metres from March 4 to 8, 2014.

MIFF organisers intend to continue to work hard to ensure all exhibitors and buyers gain as much return as possible from the fair.

Buyers now can sign up for MIFF 2014 with free admission for online registration by Jan 31, 2014. For more information including special rates by MIFF hotel partners, please visit www.miff.com.my.



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Industry Counts on Youth for Design Inspiration

By Yeo Li Shian
Furnish Now writer



Young design graduates who improve their skills don't only benefit themselves—they benefit the entire furniture industry.

Hence, industry leaders must play a key role in leading design cultivation among young design graduates and undergraduates.

These are among the key messages emphasised by Philip Yap, Chief Judge of the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) 2014 Furniture Design Competition (FDC) during a two-hour briefing and networking session between design experts, eight participating manufacturers, creative heads and lecturers from 15 local institutions in Kuala Lumpur recently.

More role models that share their experiences and build bridges between industry and institutions are needed to cultivate further furniture design interest among current manufacturers and budding designers, said Mr. Yap, also the founder of Philip Yap Design.

Mr. Yap said that while furniture's commercial feasibility is strengthened by innovation, judges hope that more effective communication can be established between the manufacturers and students to benefit the former's in-house R&D department.

"What's important in design is producing design that can be produced and is commercially feasible for manufacturers," the China-based furniture designer added.

Ten leading Malaysian producers with home, office and outdoor furniture expertise are supporting the competition. Ten design finalists have been shortlisted, with one promising finalist showcasing two designs.

Associate Prof. Mohamad Omar Bidin, Dean of the School of Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia, attended the event and felt that the networking session served as a practical platform for academicians to understand current industry trends and market needs.

"I think the standard of the industry has moved up a few levels higher, as can be seen from the vast improvement and differences in terms of market demands and furniture designs now," said Prof. Omar, a former interior designer and current MIFF judge.

Themed 'Living Furniture, Leading Design,' MIFF FDC 2014 aims to connect young designers with industry players from the start.

Opened to young talents aged below 30, the competition's top 11 entries are matched with participating manufacturers to produce prototypes that are showcased during the

20th anniversary of MIFF from March 4 to 8, 2014. Prototyping of the designs already is underway. The top prize winner will walk home RM10,000 richer, while second and third prize winners will be awarded RM5,000 and RM2,500 respectively.

Visit www.miffdc.com for more details.

Photos on this page: The MIFF FDC already is underway, with youths vying for design glory under the careful watch of experienced judges



MIFF: Haven for **BRAND** *By Yeo Li Shian Furnish Now writer* **EXPOSURE**



Nowadays, MIFF is more than just Malaysian exhibitors showcasing their best products. MIFF attracts exhibitors as far away as Spain and Korea, and for good reason. The show really is one of the world's top furniture export fairs, and overseas exhibitors seem to know this best.

Sometimes, all it takes is a single decision to make a huge impact on a company's reputation.

That was the case for Spanish manufacturer Resol Group, in a good way.

Travelling more than 6,572 miles to participate in MIFF 2013 turned out to be a fantastic decision for the Spanish resin furniture manufacturing leader.

The experience?

"Simply perfect!" said Mr. Albert Llorens, Brand Manager of Resol Group, in a recent interview with Furnish Now.

The positive response that the company received from trade visitors was beyond initial expectations, he added. The first time



exhibitor at MIFF highlighted that the fair is a time- and cost-saving opportunity to help exhibitors "reach potential domestic and international customers by having them concentrated in one place for a few days."

Capitalising on its fibreglass and polypropylene (PP) furniture manufacturing expertise, Resol Group's booth (parked under the name Resinas Olot S. L.) was an instant hit among visitors.

The company secured more than 50 sales on the first day of the exhibition alone.

"In fact, it was our best exhibit ever in Asia," said Jordi Ibanez, Export Area Manager of Resol Group. "Up to the third day (of the exhibition), we had gotten over 150 new contacts and a new distributor in Malaysia."

Fourth-time exhibitor Taiwan Mirror Glass Enterprise Co. Ltd. feels that MIFF has covered its basic need of getting serious brand exposure in SEA countries. The fourth-generation family business enjoyed one of its best sales deals with an Australian company at MIFF 2013.

"The estimated value of the one-year order of glass cabinets is around USD800,000," said Jackson Lin, General Manager of the company. "Our rough estimate of sales growth and increase in numbers of customers is [both] around 20 to 30 percent during the years of exhibiting at MIFF."

The performance was satisfying enough to motivate them to return to MIFF annually since 2010. Thanking MIFF for its easy-to-navigate booth layout, this pioneer in glass and mirror manufacturing is set to entice visitors with more glass-oriented product choices at the 20th edition of MIFF, next year.

As for China-based Zhejiang Henglin Chair Industry Co. Ltd., MIFF has been part of its business calendar since—well, probably 2006—in order to achieve bigger brand exposure.

"I can't remember [the exact number of participation times]," said Jake Zeng, Sales Manager of Zhejiang Henglin. In other words, according to Mr. Zeng, it's all a blur of continuously positive experience.

"Although we can't put a quantitative measure on the benefits or sales reaped from MIFF, the fair has certainly helped to restructure our furniture marketing strategy too to suit our target audience," said Mr. Zeng, who also mentioned that the company has visited other international furniture fairs in Dubai, Germany and the United States yearly.

For most exhibitors, MIFF is the best meeting point to connect and reconnect with new and old customer friends.

"The best thing is to be able to meet all new and existing customers at one place," said Ke Jo, Assistant Manager of Korea-based safes manufacturing expert Sun Safes Mfg. Co., who revealed that the company has returned to MIFF more than 10 times. "[We have a great time,] especially when we get to showcase our latest functional and beautiful safes to trade visitors and potential clients."

MIFF Stakeholders Discuss...

Why They Regularly Attend

They've been coming to the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) for 10, 15, 20 years, and for good reason.

It might be far, but in the world's furniture supply chain, MIFF provides link after link after link.

Still, we called up faraway buyers and media members that have attended MIFF throughout the years to find out what it is that is so important about the show.

Here's what they said....



TONY NEILSON

Publisher at Timber+Design International, New Zealand

Some of the improvements I've seen in MIFF over the years are the way many Malaysian producers are making much better quality products, and some have invested in professional design. There is also a bigger range of options for buyers from outside Malaysia. Booth presentation is slowly improving, but because there are so many small spaces, this will always be a challenge. MIFF is unquestionably the friendliest in ASEAN. What it lacks in modern exhibition space it more than makes up for with its range of buyer-friendly services and the consistency of the offering.

HUGH BOYLE

Director of Claremont Centre Ltd., United Kingdom

I've been coming to MIFF since 1995. Malaysia still retains advantages in furniture manufacturing over most of Asia. In the quality of panel board production, technology and experience of its furniture manufacturing, Malaysia is well ahead of China, Vietnam and Indonesia. Its compliance with environmental certifications—for example, chain of custody—is still ahead of its rivals. All these are aided by being almost self-sufficient in timber since a large percentage of panel board content is indigenous rubber wood. What I love about Malaysia is that it feels like home. I have made many good friends among its people and the food is wonderful.



MICHAEL AMINI

Amini Innovation Corp., USA

I have been visiting MIFF since its inception. I visit it year after year and I like Malaysia as a country. I visit the show hoping to see creative goods. I think there is a lot of opportunity for furniture industry in Malaysia as long as the industry becomes unified and factories start designing and making diversified and medium-end furniture categories.

STUART WOLFF

Managing Director of Stuart Wolff Importers, South Africa

I've been coming to MIFF since 1997. I'm primarily interested in the dining chairs and dining tables at the fair. What I love about Malaysia are the people. I enjoy dealing with the people and my suppliers. They are very easy to talk to.



DAVID BERGER

President of Monarch Specialties Inc., Canada

I've been coming to MIFF for 10 years now and for me it is an opportunity to see new products from my current suppliers and to find other sources. The top reasons why I will be attending MIFF 2014 are to check out new products and discuss programs with my current suppliers. MIFF provides an easy market to work with and the Malaysian product quality is generally good.

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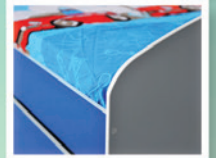
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