

HIGHLIGHTS

page **2** Furniture industry experts abound at MIFF 2017 seminars



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It's day 3 at MIFF 2017; find out what buyers and exhibitors think of the show



page **8** Buyers' Night remains true to MIFF's tradition of fun



Do not miss the Prize Presentation Ceremony today, March 10 (Friday) at Level 3, MECC, 2.30 pm.

Guest of Honour:
YBhg Datuk Seri J. Jayasiri
Secretary General,
Ministry of International Trade and Industry



New MIFF Era in 2018 'Design Connects People'

by Annalyn Zoglmann
Furnish Now writer

Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) once again cements its reputation as Southeast Asia's leading industry event and enters a new era of expansion as it announced the addition of a much bigger exhibition venue in 2018. More market segments will also be introduced and a new tagline *Design Connects People* will be adopted to bring buyers and exhibitors closer together in leveraging business.

In a press conference yesterday, officials of MIFF and fair organiser UBM Malaysia said that aside from its present venue at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), MIFF will expand to the new Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC), thereby increasing exhibition space by 25 per cent, or a total of 100,000 square meters representing the two venues.

The next MIFF will be held on March 8 to 11, 2018 and its Chairman Dato' Dr. Tan Chin Huat said they expect the participation of delegates from 600 to 700 exhibitors as a result of the bigger exhibition areas.

"Our focus is on continued growth and building on what MIFF always delivered over the last 23 years as a world class, organised trade show. I am glad that our exhibitors now are paying more attention to R&D and the results are showing in MIFF. In the last few years, they have been changing their concepts and coming up with new collections," Dato' Tan said.

MIFF General Manager Karen Goi said MIFF 2018 shall adopt the slogan *Design Connects People* to stress on the fact that great design is key to standing out in the market and keep up with competition.

"MIFF – with *Design Connects People* – will help industry participants establish business opportunities through networking, dialogue, learning experiences and other creative solutions in the digital age," she added.

Providing much-needed excitement to MIFF 2018 are two new segments which will be introduced. These are *designRena*, a dedicated hall for the best selected exhibitors in Malaysia; and *MIFF Timber Mart*, a one-stop wood and wood-related material showcase and trading platform for

global wood suppliers and buyers.

DesignRena will be supported by a collaboration platform, *FDC in Action*, that will link past winners of the MIFF Furniture Design Competition (FDC) with industry players so they can work on product innovation and presentation.

HOTSHOT



Joey Yap (left), marketing executive at Oasis Furniture Industries (PWTC, Booth 2B23), stands tall to show off a new adjustable-height desk. Sit down or stand up to work - even stand on a chair - ha. Cool shoes not included....

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Diversifying Materials and Changing Perceptions

by Shantini Harriet Ariaratnam
Furnish Now writer

In a study that has spanned the last 30 years, Prof. Dr. Jegatheswaran Ratnasingam and Mr. Lim Choon Liat from the Forestry Faculty of Universiti Putra Malaysia, shared their findings during a seminar on *Value Adding Strategies in*

Furniture: Use of Imported Wood Resources at MIFF 2017 yesterday.

Furniture is bought and sold based on perceived value whether from aesthetic appeal, price tag or the customers' willingness to pay. However, the most important perceived value is the wood material used as familiarity with the wood is crucial in the furniture purchase

decision process. The choice of wood materials used in furniture is largely influenced by cost, market preference, product specification and supply availability.

Malaysia has about 108 commercial wood species but not all of them are available all the time or in significant quantities, which puts manufacturers in

a bit of a bind. Since demand is greater than supply, Malaysia imports most of its wood mainly from the USA but 95% of imported wood is being utilised by door and flooring manufacturers that have become large and lucrative industries and not the furniture industry. Hence, they are stuck with rubberwood. The furniture industry in Malaysia commonly uses rubberwood which is considered cheap wood and so furniture made from it is also expected to be cheap.

There has been a 1.5% decline in the export furniture market per annum and this may be because as contract OEM manufacturers, Malaysian companies have to be the cheaper source and are unable to upscale due to competition emerging from other countries from around the region like Vietnam, a drop in furniture prices and their own mindsets.

Furniture does not have to be made from wood alone and we have to break away from re-hashing the same designs time and time again. By diversifying materials and coming up with our own designs, we will give higher value to the furniture we manufacture.

THE IMPACT OF DESIGN

by Chow Ee-Tan
Furnish Now writer

The Internet is changing the world and that includes the furniture industry.

In an industry seminar entitled *Impact of Design – the Interior Design Community and the Furniture Industry*, speaker Mr. Enrico Cleva said while contents and new ideas play a significant role in the evolving furniture industry, Internet is changing the impact that design has on people's life, as individuals and as community.

He spoke on the possibilities for the furniture industry to support the trends and embrace new ideas to increase revenues and compete in the global market. With the evolution of market



needs, and variations in market segments, he couldn't stress enough on contents and new ideas.

Mr. Cleva is the owner of EC&CO from Milan, Italy, and Consultant for the American Society of Interior Designers and Designers Associations of North America – two major interior designer

associations of North America.

He said market structure of the furniture industry is generally divided by contract, online and retail, with the former two segments growing. In each segment, the influence of interior designers is always present.

"The furniture industry must look at the demographics of the consumers," he said. "Millennials, although have less spending powers, overtake Baby Boomers as America's largest generation – they account for 30 percent of the market share and 40 percent of the population." This generation has brought in new trends that come with key words such as such as connectivity, Internet, green wellness, carbon free, and organic.

With these concepts, Mr. Cleva also talked about the emergence of the *WELL* and *LEED* standards. The biophilic and biomimicry design are on the cutting edge of the research and innovation in design. And most significantly, the *Internet of Things* is crucial.



The connection between technology, Internet and products cannot be downplayed. Also, Mr. Cleva reminded us that the *Internet of Things* is an enormously fast growing market and has potential massive economic impact. For instance, the market of *Internet of Things* devices owned from 2015 to 2025 will increase by 489.55% globally.

He also gave examples of furniture projects that incorporate technology in their designs, and the positive wellness impact they aim to have for individuals and community.

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'Table2Gather' Took Centre Stage at MIFF FDC 2017

by Chow Ee-Tan
Furnish Now writer

You would have seen the eight finalists' photographs and designs in many posters around the exhibition halls by now!

Finally, winners of this year's MIFF Furniture Design Competition (FDC) will be unveiled this afternoon at an award winning ceremony at MaTrade Exhibition & Convention Centre (MECC).

The first, second and third prize winner will receive RM10,000, RM5,000 and RM2,500, respectively, plus trophy and certificate. Each finalist will receive Rm500 and a certificate.

The theme for this year's competition

is 'Table2Gather'. Participants were required to design a table-and-chair set for indoor, outdoor or commercial use. The design must incorporate wood and participants were encouraged to use a mix of materials.

The competition attracted 233 entries from 217 design students and 16 young working professionals. The contestants went through two pre-judging rounds and a final judging last Tuesday by a panel of judges.

The panel of judges is headed by Philip Yap (PYD Associates) China/Malaysia, and consists of Tommaso Masera (Masera Design Ltd) Italy/China, Lu Ke Yan (Tian Di Ru Feng) China,



Ar Lim Wei Hong (Arkitek WHL) Malaysia, Hamidah Abdullah (Malaysian Timber Council) Malaysia, Shinichi Mitsuki (MITSUI Designtec Co Ltd) Japan and Dr. Eric Leong (The One Academy) Malaysia.

Mr. Philip Yap commended the finalists for their achievements, but said in order to add value to their creations, they can't purely develop a design based

on inspiration only but also based on intelligence and practicality.

FDC is a platform for young creative minds to showcase their innovative skills in furniture design, draw new talent to the furniture world and promote the development of the Malaysian furniture industry through well-designed furniture products.

Daecan Tee Jia Chyn, 25 CRADLE

Inspired by using a combination of materials including oak, rattan, woven wicker and upholstery, the one-seater and two-seater lounge sofas exude the rustic charm of rattan and natural materials. It is paired with a side table and a coffee table suitable for both indoor and open spaces.



How Juin Lynn, 21 SEMI-LOCERA

A two-in-one seating for small space living is inspired by the wings of the butterfly. Made of solid wood, the table can be converted into a chair and side table, with loose cushions added onto it. The same range can be replicated for a bedroom set.



Nur Atiqah Iman Aminuddin, 21 SIMPLY-SIT

Chairs and tables made of plywood in a triangle-shaped modular. Built with several triangular bases threaded on a long connector, it can be a single bench, a bench with a table or a bench with a backrest.



Zech Siew Ze Chon, 25 TRAPEZOIDS DINING SET

Made of solid wood and veneer, this six-seater dining set features open back chairs with fabric cushions. The tabletop is a patchwork ash and walnut veneer. The overall concept is to encourage closeness.



Yap Xin Yi, 21 TSUMINERU

Inspired by the concept of a dim sum steamer, the design concept is a rounded, stackable and convertible furniture. It can be used as stools, tables or storage.



Tan Ying Chi, 21 EYE LASH

Using both solid timber and metal frame, this three-piece coffee table set is inspired by the human eye. The chair with curved wooden back resembles an eyelash, and has a swing side table. The coffee table comes with three-eye-shape solid timber tops and a metal base.



Victoria Pamela Yap Wei, 26 THE ABLE

A neat, minimalist set that can be used as breakfast table, kitchen island unit or discussion table. It comes with four padded wood bar stools and a drawer side table that can be turned into a kid's chair. There is also a storage drawer at the table.



Yang Wen Wei, 21 NVNA TEA TABLE

The shapes of these pair of chairs and table come from the Chinese characters for male and female. The blue and red colours show a visual contrast of masculine and feminine.




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**MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL
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Blast from the Past

Welcome to the industrial era with Hommax International's latest designs for dining furniture. Made from solid rubberwood and MDF, the products are enhanced by incorporating industrial motifs to the designs. Imagine giant screws and steel plating, all made from rubberwood yet with finishing that sticks to the authentic look of real steel. Chair seats made from linen with leather-like finish, further gives the products that rugged rustic appearance from days of yore. Located in Muar, in the state of Johor, Hommax pays homage to an era that impelled global changes, but with the warm glow of wood instead of the cold touch of steel.

Hommax International
PWTC, Booth 125
www.hommaxfurniture.com



Balau Beauty

While most sun loungers are made of Meranti wood, this sun lounger is made of red balau wood for both beauty and durability. A new product by Supreme Tropical Furniture which specialises in using Malaysia's natural wood also comes with a side table made of the same material. The sun lounger, with adjustable back, can be used on its own or paired with cushion and is both popular in the home and commercial markets, especially for resorts in Europe.

Supreme Tropical Furniture
PWTC, Booth 303
www.timber.com.my



Chair Affair

Chairs are chairs; they're meant to be sat on, but they don't have to be boring. The products offered by Anji Meatang Furniture Co. Ltd. easily catch the eye because of their attractive colors and chic designs. They're meant to decorate functional spaces - be it beauty salons, coffeeshops, conference rooms or just simple homes. The stools also come in different shapes with adjustable height. Chair by day, bar stool by night. The modern designs assure one that a small piece of furniture can indeed be a conversation piece.

Anji Meatang Furniture
PWTC, Booth 142A
www.cl-chairsupplies.com



Chinese Heritage

You may be captivated by this darkwood chair of character at the entrance of Yeo Aik Wood's booth. A specialist in designer wooden chairs, the company features a few of its in-house designer Yeo Kai Xin's creations, such as this chair that is inspired by traditional Chinese antique. Made of solid rubberwood, the chair is introduced as inheriting 'Chinese classicism decorative art into a contemporary setting by proportioning the furniture based on modern spatial planning'.

Yeo Aik Wood
PWTC, Booth 318 to 319A
www.yeoaik.com

Classic Wooden Bedset

Muafur Industries caters specially to those who love classic wooden bedroom furniture. This bedroom set, one of their bestsellers, is designed especially for the American market, and features a classic wooden bed frame made from a combination of MDF and cherry veneer with upholstery. The darkwood design comes with matching TV cabinet, wardrobe and chest drawers - all of them featuring classic motif and intricate design at the legs.

Muafur Industries
MECC, Booth A23
www.muafur.net



Elegant European Inspired Designs

At Wegmans, ultimate elegance is a philosophy they adhere to. With a focus on rubberwood dining furniture, they have extended to a greater product range that fits any living room or bedroom, using premium timber like imported oak and walnut from the United States as well as Malaysian rubberwood. Their range of European inspired oak and walnut creations will evoke feelings of simplicity and warmth in any home. Available in a myriad of colours and modern geometric prints.

Wegmans Furniture Industries
PWTC, Booth 320A
www.wegmansfurniture.com

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Acacia Zen

Forms, tones and shades play an important part in design. Take this bedroom set from Inception Design & Trading, which cleverly combines MDF veneer with acacia wood in a really sophisticated design. The bedroom set is inspired by Zen style, as the bed features low platform legs and a lower king-sized bed. The bedhead is made of MDF board sprayed with dark veneer, and paired with acacia wood in stripes. The bedroom set comes with a matching side table and a dresser.

Inception Design & Trading
PWTC, Booth 330
www.idt.my

Back to Nature Chairs

“If you see the back, you can imagine a tree with a branch. And lumbar support is like the leaf. If you sit on the chair and lean to the back, we can say you are sitting on nature and leaning onto the tree.” Such is the introduction of Chair Meister Korea to their 2017 Collection Nature Series, an environment-inspired lineup that takes into consideration human anatomy to include support for the back, arms and lower body. Emphasis is placed on design as well with assorted colours to choose from and the so-called Nature Window Mesh material on the upholstery.

Chair Meister Korea
PWTC, Booth 2B29A
www.chairmeister.com



Rock-a-bye Baby

Welcome to the present version of the cradle which should make taking care of babies fun and not such a chore. RNS Furniture from China offers the electric auto swing baby cradle equipped with smart control panel and infrared remote control. The rockers can accommodate young ones up to 25 kgs. and music can be played for entertainment by plugging in an SD card or USB flash drive. Sound sensor can be turned on so that the baby's cries can be heard while nanny or mommy is away. The unit, priced at only a little more than US\$100, comes with cushion and mosquito net. The company also offers electric swing and walking baby seat having the same smart functions.

RNS Furniture
PWTC, Booth 155A
www.rnsfurniture.com



Hidden Treasures of the Workplace

With a reputation for product ranges that are suitable for a diverse portfolio of projects and clients, VS Office Furniture ventures into designs that shout modernisation and the young-at-heart. An executive table with fitted cabinets that saves space as well as keeps everything at arms length for the rising young stars of any company. Discover hidden niches for cabling and plug points right at the table. Made from chipboard combined with steel legs, this participant of the MIFF 2017 Furniture Excellence Award is already looking like a winner.

VS Office Furniture
PWTC, Booth 2B26
www.vsofficefurniture.com



Safe in The Cradle

Cots and cradles are as classic as time. A baby, who spent nine months in a mother's womb, will naturally want to be welcomed in the softest, gentlest environment. Baby furniture by Funbies features changing tables, high chairs, playpens and cots to serve as a refuge during a child's growing up years. The cot itself can be converted to a bed as the young one grows up. All pieces are durable enough to be passed on to generations since they're made of 100 percent solid wood and the paint is made free from hazardous chemicals. Only the best for babies, you bet.

Vistawood Industries
PWTC, Booth 108
www.vistawood.com

White Beauty

Check out this plush sofa that can be turned into a sofa bed – one of the attractive Firenze ranges of leather sofa from Annex Sofa that has dual function. Made of thick cowhide leather, the white beauty has an adjustable backrest that can be turned into a super-single sofa bed. Spacious and comfortable, it is roomy enough for up to three persons or you can decide to snuggle in it, whichever way you like!

Annex Sofa
MECC, Booth A30
www.firenze.com.my



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SO FAR SO GOOD

BUYERS

I am originally from Belarus but I currently reside in New York. So I have businesses in both countries. My business is online selling of dining furniture and have been buying furniture from Malaysia for the last 10 years. I have been attending MIFF for the last three years. I would like to see more designed furniture for dining that are not expensive.

Aliaksandr Shumski
President, SK New Interiors Inc.,
USA



We have been coming to MIFF for a long time, since the beginning with my father. But on my own for the last nine to ten years. We look for mid-range priced bedroom and dining sets. We are from Chicago and distribute to about 800 stores nationwide in the United States. We come here to meet old suppliers and maybe meet some new ones. Overall the show is good. If the show is moving next year to a venue that has everything under one roof, then very good. We would like to see more suppliers from Vietnam as it will save us a trip there.

Rafee Hammad
Nationwide Furniture Distributors Inc.,
USA



We have been involved in online retail for the last ten years offering electronics, lifestyle products and accessories but two years ago we ventured into furniture to expand our product portfolio. This is our first time at MIFF and to further our business development, we came here looking for suppliers. We have already identified some potential Malaysian suppliers and find the price range here good.

Priya Zutshi
Senior Manager Business Development
Flipkart India Private Limited,
India



We are an Indian exporter to Africa and vice versa. We purchase hardwood furniture and don't mind any substitute material as long as it looks like hardwood. It's our first time here at MIFF and we are focused on Malaysian manufacturers. It would be too expensive to make hardwood furniture in India as the cost of innovation is very high, especially at these prices because Malaysia is a good source for wood. Price should be the last bargaining chip when negotiating for what is unique and new.

B N Mishra
Inside Africa Private Limited,
India



Jose Domingos Mucavel
Administrator
Metafil Lda,
Mozambique



Khaled Trirat
Khaled Trirat,
Buyer from Algeria



F. Vincent
Chief Executive, Design Centre Chennai,
India



Aiden Choi
Assistant Manager Overseas Sales
Impregnated Coating,
Korea



The first time I came to MIFF was in 2012 and this year is my second time. When I came in 2012 I found some good office furniture suppliers and now I have come back to what is new to add to my product line. Malaysia is strong in furniture and I think that Malaysian manufacturers should think about opening up factories in other countries to develop the industries there with their know-how and skill. This will foster better relationship with those countries as well as provide after sales service to their customers. When furniture breaks down in certain places, they don't have the ability to repair them but if the manufacturer is there, it can be done. Like Toyota, they are everywhere; why not furniture?

We were at the Dubai Fair and came here to meet up with some of the suppliers we met there. We are also manufacturers of residential and office furniture, but for large outfits. We are looking for new styles and products. We've been coming here in the last eight to nine years. We come here because it is easier to import from Malaysia than China. The styles have been changing, which is good. The show has been consistent all these years with no problems.

We are a melamine paper manufacturer in Korea. This is my first time here and I find the show big and interesting but not as big as China. We came here to do market research as Malaysia has high technology in manufacturing melamine paper. My boss actually learned from a Malaysian company here before setting up in Korea. But we have discovered that the prices here and China are much cheaper compared to Korea.

I have been attending MIFF since 1999. As a wholesaler in Algeria, I look for dining furniture and use MIFF to meet my regular suppliers but this time I have found some new Malaysian manufacturers."



EXHIBITORS

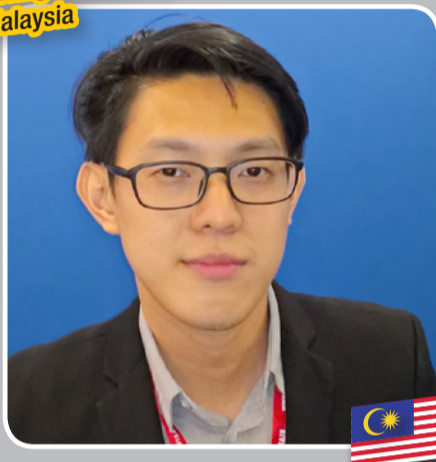
We have been exhibiting here for more than 10 years. Overseas buyers are taking time to decide, whereas previously they would make immediate decisions on whether or not they would buy. But we will still come back next year for branding purposes, to show our product. The duration of four days is just nice, as it used to be five days.

Vicky Boon
Assistant Marketing Manager
(Export Division)
Artak Design,
Malaysia



This is the third year we are here at MIFF. It is a good place for us to gain more exposure. For us it is mainly the exposure for our software. We feel that we have gotten many contacts from the exhibition.

ShiJia Ooi
3D Designer
Configura Pacific,
Malaysia



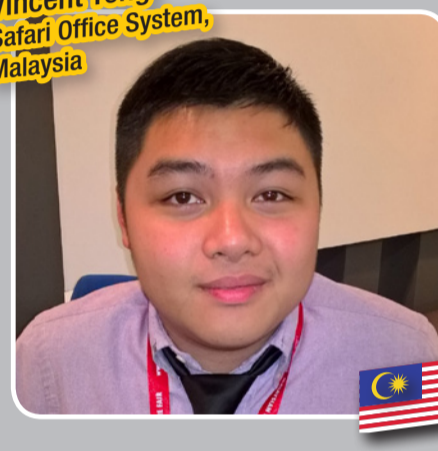
This is the second time we are taking part in MIFF. I think it will help our business, we have another platform to show our products. We want to expand overseas, as most of our customers are mainly from China at the moment.

Tek Yong Lin
Manager
Suheng Furniture Accessory Factory,
China



This is our 20th year with MIFF. It is good as we interacted with quite a few new clients, mostly from India, Middle East and Japan. This platform is quite huge for us as we get to see clients from around the world. It is a good platform. MIFF service is good. When we had problems with the lights while setting up, prompt action was taken.

Vincent Yöng
Safari Office System,
Malaysia



Cynthia Tan
Marketing Executive
Ecomate,
Malaysia



Ely Tio
General Manager
Chinfon Furniture Industries,
Malaysia



Roby Qiu
Sales Manager
Guangdong Sunteam Steel and
Wooden Products,
China



Sam Ng
Regional Manager
Lenchong Metal Works,
Malaysia



It's our first time participating in MIFF. So far it is quite good. Business is OK. We will definitely come again next year as there are many visitors from different countries coming to MIFF. The MIFF crew is very helpful and friendly.

We have been here for the last 10 to 11 years. This is our permanent spot to display our products. The show has a good impact on our business, and people know us. We have a lot of repeat customers coming to buy our products, from the US, Australia, Middle East, Africa and Canada. The organisers have been really helpful and they provide us the same spot each year so it is convenient for our customers to find us.

We have had a booth here since 2009. We want to focus more on customers from Africa and Europe. It is easier for them to come here than to China.

We have taken part in MIFF for 7 years now. There are always many buyers that come here every year, so we still come back. Almost all of our buyers for our metal beds and dining sets are from the United Kingdom, but we would like to see our market base grow.

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The Merriment Never Stops at MIFF BUYERS' NIGHT

by Hazlin Hassan
Furnish Now writer



Some 700 trade visitors from 80 countries were feted with food and wine at the annual Buyers' Night – the highly-anticipated evening of entertainment and revelry at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF).

Guests kicked back after two days of active trading to enjoy a sumptuous treat of Malaysian Chinese dishes while watching performers Vina Khoo and Sean C sang songs by Shawn Mendes, Adele and Justin Timberlake.

Several buyers won prizes including a MacBook Pro, a MacBook Air and iPads,

among others, during the lucky draw. The night "celebrates the energy and confidence in the trade show," said Karen Goi, MIFF General Manager.

The evening's Guest-of-Honour Dr. Mohd Shahreen Zainooreen Madros, CEO of Malaysia External Trade Development Corp (Matrade) congratulated MIFF for its move to expand the show next year, "I believe the opportunities are abundant and the timing is right," he emphasised.

MIFF Founder and Chairman Dato' Dr. Tan Chin Huat and UBM Asia ASEAN Business Managing Director M. Gandhi

were also present at the event which had 'Dancing All Night' as its theme.

The performance of UBM Malaysia staff turned out to be the highlight of the program, which started with a Beauty and the Beast song number and continued on with the *Chammak Challo* dance led by Ms. Kelie Lim and M. Gandhi. Imagine that! Well, you don't have to imagine because it actually happened! That's MIFF Buyers' Night for you - fun and fabulous, always!

Feels Like Coming Home

by Patrick Ledoux
Chief Editor, Meubihome, Belgium



When I first came to Kuala Lumpur, I was wondering what I was doing here. I flew all the way from Brussels to find a humid and a tropical climate and found myself in a city that took time to discover.

I was invited by the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF). I've met its founding father Dato' Tan, its staff where Karen takes the lead and Kelie who is involved in the press relations.

Little by little I discovered the Malaysian furniture style and its great potential. Throughout the years many companies invested in product

development, innovation and marketing.

MIFF became more and more international, although I still meet many of the people from the early days.

The fair has been taken over by UBM Malaysia, but Dato' Karen and Kelie are still here. The staff works 24 hours at the service of its exhibitors and visitors. The Malaysian furniture style is much more universal and commercial in the meantime.

After all these years, I am still coming to Kuala Lumpur. I have made many friends here and discovered an

amazing city with friendly people and an easygoing lifestyle. The organisers have become like a family to me.

Next years' edition [MIFF 2018] is already highlighted in my agenda. I want to be here when MIFF moves to a new exhibition venue [MITEC], where the fair will take place under one roof.

I wish the organising team all the best with this big step and I am convinced it will become even better than ever before.

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UBM Malaysia

A-8-1 Hampshire Place Office,
157 Hampshire, 1 Jalan Mayang Sari
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Tel : +603-2176 8788

Fax: +603-2164 8786

Email: info@miff.com.my

Website: www.miff.com.my

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EDITORIAL TEAM

Creative Content Director: Matt Young
Chief Editor : Gloria D. Gamat
Project Manager : Ruchi Mahajan Ranga
Designers : Winson Chua, Edison Tan
Writers : Annalyn Zoglmann, Chow Ee-Tan,
Shantini Harriet Ariaratnam,
Hazlin Hassan

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Booth : Hall 3 No. 323

