

Growth planned for Singapore

More than 32,000 pieces of furniture and furnishing products from around the Asean region were on show at IFFS, demonstrating the importance of Singapore as an effective export marketing platform.

THE INTERNATIONAL Furniture Fair Singapore and ASEAN Furniture Show (IFFS/AFS) saw participants from 29 countries including Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia as well as an 8.8% increase in the number local Singaporean manufacturers. Of the 505 exhibitors, two thirds had participated in the show before meaning visitors enjoyed more than 150 new displays as well as revisiting familiar suppliers.

The joint show continues to focus on furniture design with an increase in the quality and quantity in the Furniture Design Awards (FDA), FLIP! Challenge, Furniture Design Forum and Design Gallery. At the same time it will be expanding into the machinery sector with the announcement of the new WOWMAC fair in 2007 (see Furnishing News p4).

The Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) also announced during IFFS that it will be giving local industry a strong shot in the arm with a S\$16 million 3-year plan to

help the industry sustain its strategic advantage and enhance its competitive edge in the international marketplace.

This will boost Singapore's share of the global furniture market to an estimated S\$1.7 billion in three years. It will focus on three key areas: nurture a high value-added workforce, develop more design-centric companies and create a synergised industry network to capture a bigger global market share.

Mr James Koh, President of the SFIC, said: "The SFIC is glad to be able to customise initiatives that complement the industry's competitive strengths – high quality control and reliability – to



design and retail excellence to industry branding and market development."

Another area of improvement for the 2007 Fair will be the SFIC's International Furniture Centre. This is a permanent furniture showroom

building is fast filling up with export-oriented companies from Singapore, ASEAN and other parts of the world. Opening at the end of 2006, this centre will enable international buyers to source products from these nations year round.

Awards galore

The Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) has announced a new design talent incubation incentive programme to partner leading furniture companies to hire and groom

sustain our growth and viability with the support of the LEAD programme and the assistance of SPRING Singapore, IE Singapore and various other government agencies. This well-rounded development plan is designed to benefit multiple fronts in the industry, ranging from human capital optimisation and promoting





hone their skills and work towards the commercial production of their designs.

The FDA 2006, which comprises the Students, Young Designers and Open categories, drew a total of 365 entries from Singapore and 13 other countries across the world, including Australia. The theme for this year's competition was "FLY", where students and young designers were challenged to think up innovative concepts that were truly "out of this world".

The FDA 2006 also saw an impressive 37 per cent increase in the Open category entries compared to FDA 2005. There was no Gold award presented but Silver went to the 'Egg Shaped

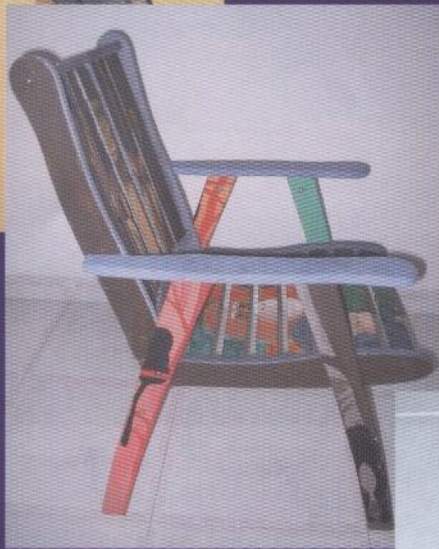
Spain, Taiwan and Vietnam participated. The Students category for this year boasted 237 entries and they hailed from local secondary schools, design institutes, polytechnics as well as institutes of higher learning like the National University of Singapore and Singapore Institute of Management. The Student Gold award went to 'Come Fly with Me' and for the Young Designer to 'Streamline Chair'.

The entries were judged on creativity, functionality and marketability by a panel of distinguished local and foreign judges comprising prominent industry personalities and reputable commercial designers. Entries to the Students and Young Designers categories were also judged on the participants' interpretation of the theme.

On the FLIP side

Once again the challenge was set for local arts and design related students and aspiring young designers to turn an unfinished piece of furniture into a work of art. This time it was a timber garden chair and the results show ingenuity and creativity. Some 54 submissions were received of which 15 were selected as finalists and showcased in the Open Space @ Entrance Foyer at IFFS. We show you just a few we thought the best.

The next combined IFFS/AFS show will be 1-5 March 2007.



outstanding young design talents over the next three years.

The programme will leverage the annual Furniture Design Award (FDA) to identify 15 outstanding designers and award them with a one-year employment contract with some of Singapore's top furniture companies over the next three years. The SFIC will fund the salaries of the designers for 12 months while they are placed on a meaningful mentoring programme to

Coffee Table'. For the first time countries such as Belgium, Canada, Germany,

