



In conjunction with:
ASEAN FURNITURE

IN THE PINK OF DESIGN

By Nicole Liang

With international and celebrity designers attesting to its effectiveness, the International Furniture Fair Singapore/ASEAN Furniture Show has become the place to launch and see everything new and fresh.

WHILE SINGAPOREAN FURNITURE brands receive a shot in the arm to boost their design competencies, at the International Furniture Fair Singapore/ASEAN Furniture Show (IFFS/AFS), design also takes centre stage. Not only international designers but celebrity designers too have chosen this event as the launch pad for product debut and market expansions. It has truly become the trade event to go to for all things new and fresh.

One example of an exciting product launch at IFFS/AFS 2009 is by Singapore Mozaic ambassador Office Planner Pte Ltd. The company collaborated with international designer icon, Karim Rashid, for a new furniture collection, Pinker. Rashid's impressive design portfolio includes projects and commissions for Alessi, Prada, Method, Miyake and more.

"I am truly excited and happy to premiere my new brand Pinker at the IFFS/AFS 2009 ... Today, Singapore is more than ready to embrace innovation and new design ideas. That is why I have chosen IFFS/AFS 2009 with its strong design-led focus and international reach as the right platform to start repainting the world Pinker," said Rashid.

Associated to Rashid in this exclusive brand are Gavin Woo and Katrina Tan, founders and owners of Office Planner. For the first time, through this collaboration, Rashid is no longer just a designer or consultant but a true business partner as well.

According to Pinker's CEO, Gilles Mangin, all four partners met in October last year and Rashid began drawing immediately.



3rd from left to right: Philip Teh and Vivian Wong from Journey East with Vincent Cantaert of Mamagreen

By November, the designs were out and the prototypes were seen for the first time in March at IFFS.

MAMAGREEN: IFFS/AFS A REGIONAL LAUNCH PAD

Belgium-based outdoor furniture designer/manufacturer, Mamagreen BVBA, also appreciates the exhibition's positioning as a design-centric fair. According to its founder/creative director, Vincent Cantaert, Mamagreen was established in 2001 and only started exporting its products to Asia in 2007, when it began exhibiting at the IFFS/AFS.

"At that time we took up a booth space just as an experiment without any expectations. Instead, we had immediate success. It helped us to open up markets in Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia and even the US," Cantaert said.

Mamagreen's Honeymoon Lounger, designed by Cantaert and Barbara Widiningtias, won the Best Exhibit award for Outdoor furniture at IFFS/AFS 2009, as well as an honourable mention in the Furniture Design Awards (organised by SFIC).

On top of winning double honours in these design awards, Cantaert, said that his business has increased by 30 percent year on year in 2008, and by 40 percent from January-April this year, despite an economic slowdown. "Part of the success of Mamagreen as a brand lies in its design.



Clockwise: Katrina Tan, Gilles Mangin, Gavin Woo



Karim Rashid

"We don't want to sell to everybody. Price is only one factor driving furniture purchases. If a consumer wants something more special and unique, then it naturally is more expensive," he added.

A new catalogue featuring 30 to 40 collections is made every year for the Spoga exhibition. But before that, the IFFS/AFS has always been a great testing ground for new designs, before Cantaert decides if they should be presented in Germany. As one of the preferred international trade fairs for Mamagreen's product debuts, Cantaert said that he will definitely be back next year with an exhibition space.

Mamagreen's local retailer in Singapore, Journey East, hosted a press event at its Joan Road premises on May 14, 2009 and Cantaert was also present to introduce the new collections that will be shown at Spoga from September 6 to 8, 2009 in Cologne. Vivian Wong, manager at Journey East, said: "The IFFS commands a good number of international buyers, so it is a very good testing ground. The IFFS is an important platform".