

# NEWS RELEASE

## 3<sup>rd</sup> FLIP CHALLENGE INSPIRES UNCONVENTIONAL RED OAK FURNITURE

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**SINGAPORE, 17 November 2007** – Inspiring budding young designers to create furniture from new and different lifestyle perspectives for the third time, the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) announced the winners of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Furniture • Lifestyle • Innovations • Perspectives (FLIP) Challenge today.

The FLIP Challenge, which is open to local arts and design institutes, tasks participants to innovate and transform furniture into works of art while retaining its basic functions. Students are welcomed to take part as individuals or in groups of no more than four members.

This year, participants were challenged to use six American Red Oak pieces to construct innovative and original pieces of furniture with a special focus on design and functionality.

Mr Simon Ong, Chairman of the Design Development Committee for SFIC, said: “We change the challenge of FLIP each year to keep the competition fresh and exciting. Our ultimate aim is to encourage students to think more out-of-the-box and to flex their creative muscle. While the participants have a free reign over how they leverage the wood, the challenge is in how innovatively the raw materials are used. For SFIC and the judges, we are looking out for unconventional applications of Red Oak which take full advantage of the innate characteristics and strengths of the wood. At the same time, we are also interested to see marketable yet uncommon solutions. It is only by continuously pushing the boundaries of design that we can raise the standard of the practice and the general appreciation of design in Singapore. SFIC will continue to value-add to our design push to strengthen the position of the Singapore furniture industry in the global market place.”

The 3<sup>rd</sup> FLIP Challenge received an overwhelming 60 entries from 10 schools. The 15 finalists were assessed today by the competition's distinguished panel of judges. Winners of the top three awards - Gold, Silver and Bronze – walked away with S\$1,000, S\$800 and S\$500 respectively in addition to a trophy and certificate of participation. The Merit award winners were also presented with the latter and a trophy each.

The judges of the 3<sup>rd</sup> FLIP Challenge are Mr Carsten Ovesen, Managing Director of Carsten Ovesen Design, Mr Aamer Taher, Principal Architect of Aamer Taher Design Studio, Mr Derek Lim Yong Tang, Deputy Head Chief Designer at Amtek Engineering Ltd, Mr Paul Yew Seng Por, founder of A.I.M.S Pte Ltd and Mr Michael Buckley, Consultant, World Hardwoods and a Fellow of the Royal Academy for the Advancement of the Arts in London. The students were assessed on their degree of innovation, magnitude of creativity and retention of functionality. (Please refer to the attached fact sheet and concept papers for details on the entries.)

The American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC), which has a long history of encouraging the use of American Hardwood in local furniture design and manufacturing, sponsored the Red Oak used in the 3<sup>rd</sup> FLIP Challenge. Mr John Chan, Regional Director of AHEC, Southeast Asia and Greater China, said: "With the American Hardwood Export Council building solid foundations and excellent working relationships with furniture industries across the region, we will continue to forge closer working relationship and cooperation with the Singapore furniture industry in the interest of both parties and under mutually beneficial terms."

As the lead government agency for the furniture sector, SPRING Singapore is working closely with SFIC on a three-year furniture industry growth plan and supports the FLIP Challenge to raise design standards in Singapore as well as to encourage more "Made by Singapore" furniture in the global market. Mr Png Cheong Boon, Deputy Chief Executive of SPRING Singapore, said: "Annual design initiatives like the Furniture Design Award, Furniture Design Forum and today's FLIP Challenge will continue to provide high profile platforms for our designers to express their creativity and gain recognition in the industry. Through the FLIP Challenge, local furniture players will be able to recognise new and innovative designs and further improve their own designs to stand out in the highly competitive global market."

As the FL!P Challenge continues to attract progressive designs and furniture innovations, SFIC has also revamped the logo to one that truly and dynamically reflects what the Challenge means to the industry.

Incorporating the exclamation mark into the word 'FLIP' by replacing the letter 'l', the inverted Chinese character '冂' is created in the logo. '冂' which means door or gateway, symbolises the opportunities for the furniture industry which will only be unlocked with the key of creativity and innovations. By being inverted, the door or gateway points skywards, signifying limitless "access" to opportunities for the local furniture industry with design as the bedrock for growth. This is in consonance with SFIC's objectives to nurture Singapore's pool of design talents and to provide platforms that will continue to develop and enhance the global status of the Singapore furniture industry.

The works of the 15 finalists will be showcased at levels 7 and 8 (Promenades) of the National Library from 18 November to 1 December. A "Popular Choice" award will also be presented to the designer whose furniture innovation emerges the favourite among invited guests at a close-door furniture industry networking session tonight at the National Library. The winner will be awarded \$300 and a certificate.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> FL!P Challenge is supported by DesignSingapore Council, SPRING Singapore, International Enterprise Singapore (IE Singapore), AHEC, Designers Association of Singapore, Interior Design Confederation (Singapore), Singapore Institute of Architects, V-Mark Woodcraft Pte Ltd, Trans-Link Exhibition Forwarding Pte Ltd as well as IFFS Pte Ltd.

For more information on SFIC's design initiatives, please visit [www.singaporefurniture.com](http://www.singaporefurniture.com).

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**About Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC)**

Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) was established in 1981 as the official representative body of Singapore's furniture industry. It currently represents 95% of established furniture manufacturers in Singapore, of whom 65% have subsidiary manufacturing plants in the region including China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. Its primary role is to promote the interests of its members and the Singapore furniture industry. Many of its initiatives aim to facilitate members' exposure to the world market, develop local talent and encourage entrepreneurship. SFIC also organises the annual Furniture Design Award to spur trend-setting furniture designs from Asia. To ensure the industry's growth and viability, SFIC continues to forge close partnerships with the government and trade-related agencies to harness technology, knowledge and information for effective strategic planning.

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