

Hong Kong International Furniture Fair creates vital contact point for business partnersh

By HKTDC

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Through the years 1997 – 2006, average annual furniture production in the Chinese mainland increased by 24%, or US\$53.75 billion (HK\$419.25 billion) in value terms. That accounts for 18% of the world's total production of furniture.

The third edition of the Hong Kong International Furniture Fair, which takes place from 28-31 October 2008 at AsiaWorld-Expo in Hong Kong, will serve as an important gateway for those exploring the markets of the Chinese mainland. The fair is co-organised by Hong Kong Trade Development Council and Kenfair International Ltd.

Through the years 1997 – 2006, average annual furniture production in the Chinese mainland increased by 24%, or US\$53.75 billion (HK\$419.25 billion) in value terms. That accounts for 18% of the world's total production of furniture, just second to the US. Domestic furniture consumption in the mainland is expected to grow by 7%.

Around 250 exhibitors around the world are expected to join the 2008 fair. Major exhibitors, including Brema Marketing GmbH & Co. KG from Germany, Kingsford (Hong Kong) Limited from Hong Kong, Otsuka Furniture Co., Ltd. from Japan, Rainbow from Australia and Safretti B.V. from Netherlands, have already shown their confidence in the fair.

Last year, first-time exhibitor, Gary Morris, Director of Ambient Lounge Ltd from UK, said, "The fair offers a very good opportunity to meet with new buyers and to learn more about the market. It also serves the purpose to promote our products to more potential buyers, and we have seen good quality buyers coming through."

Local exhibitors also found many quality buyers in the 2007 fair. "We are satisfied with the flow of visitors. We have already met a few potential customers who have shown their interest in our products, and we have invited them to come to visit our showroom. The fair provides us with good exposure to those who have not seen our designs before," said Fanny L F Lee, Director of Hong Kong's China Art Development Ltd.

Once again, the fair is supported by The International Furniture & Decoration (HK) Association and this year, the association extends its support as it is confirmed as the co-organiser of this event. The association, which promotes the skills and products of furniture manufacturers, designers and traders operating in Hong Kong, will set up a pavilion in the fair to showcase its members' products.

Mr. Chan Man, Chairman of the International Furniture & Decoration (HK) Association said, "we are very honoured to be taking part again at the Hong Kong International Furniture Fair organised by Hong Kong Trade Development Council and Kenfair International Limited. A group pavilion is formed to showcase furniture products from more than 20 of our member companies. Hong Kong has always been Asia's trade fair capital and is an important gateway for exploring the markets in Southern China or the whole Chinese mainland. With the expertise from the fair organisers and their worldwide network and vast database, we are confident that our exhibiting members will be having good business at the fair."

Apart from the IGLOO and Classic Furniture zones, the 2008 show will feature more new office supplies. As office design is now recognised as a powerful tool to convey a good corporate image, the fair will have

a bigger selection of office furniture.

The ever popular IGLOO zone will continue to display furniture that is Inspirational, Glamorous, Lively, Original and Outstanding. This premium zone is fun and funky and puts the focus on top-notch design and branding.

The Classic Furniture Zone encompasses antique and reproduction items, in the classic styles of both East and West with the emphasis very much on quality and refinement. Grouping exhibitors in such zones makes sourcing very convenient for visitors. This year, 12 companies from the Xian You city of Fujian province will be participating in the 2008 fair in their own group pavilion. Xian You is known as the “Capital of Chinese classic and craft furniture”, so the furniture of these exhibitors will undoubtedly contribute to the high quality of the zone.

A first-time Italian buyer at last year’s show found the fair met expectations. “I had heard that the fair is a showcase for high-end furniture and a place to see potential furniture manufacturers from all parts of Asia. I am sourcing for good manufacturers of couches and sofas, who can offer quality products and good prices. My overall impression of this fair is good. It is well-organised with good, comprehensive management. I am glad I came,” Filippo Berto of Berto Salotti said.

Another buyer from UAE mentioned that he found appropriate exhibitors in last year’s show. “This fair has created good market awareness; I have seen a great diversity of home furnishing items which are very modern and creative. Across the UAE, our company is famous for selling distinctive furniture; we always select and import the best quality products for home furnishing. I like this fair because the facilities are efficient and the staff I have met are courteous. I am able to find a choice of branded products. I think both exhibitors and buyers can find their good match here,” said Lyndon Pereira, Purchase Manager of Marlin Furniture.

The Hong Kong International Furniture Fair runs concurrently with the Hong Kong International Building and Decoration Materials and Hardware Fair and the HKTDC Hong Kong International Lighting Fair. Together, the synergy of these three events will provide serious trade visitors with many opportunities for exploring new business.

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