

MUAR 'FURNITURE CITY OF MALAYSIA' AT MIFF 2019

Muar, recently declared the 'Furniture City of Malaysia' by the government, will take the stage next year when the annual Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) opens its doors from 8 to 11 March. Fresh from its expansion in 2018, MIFF will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2019 sharing the limelight with Muar, the driving force that accounts for 70% of Malaysian furniture exports to over 160 countries including top destination, the United States, Singapore, Japan, Australia and Britain.

"The Muar factor has been an integral part of MIFF from the very start. As we celebrate our 25th year milestone, it is fitting to pay tribute to the vision and hard-earned reputation of Muar furniture makers who are the trailblazers of Malaysia's rise as a global furniture exporter. This is also an opportune time to reaffirm MIFF's strategic partnership with the Muar



Furniture Association (MFA). The remarkable mix of innovation, high quality craftsmanship and best in design from Muar will all be out there in MIFF 2019 to give visitors yet another exciting buying experience," said Ms Karen Goi, MIFF General Manager. Over 200 Muar manufacturers, making up half of Malaysian exhibitors, will converge on the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC) and Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC). A main cluster will be at the dedicated Muar Hall in MITEC organised by MFA while others will be showcasing in curated zones such as the lifestyle setting designRena, MIFF Office and Sofa Hall.

"MIFF is the best platform to view the latest productions from Muar all under one roof. Whatever type of furniture buyers are looking for is produced in Muar. The bigger show means we are returning in 2019 with even more products and latest collections to max out the display space. The MFA-MIFF strategic partnership has worked very well since 2013. The diversity of international buyers brings real business opportunities to existing and new companies, and this invariably boost Malaysia's furniture exports and expands its global network," said Mr Keh Wee Kiet, MFA President.

Muar was officially accorded 'Furniture City of Malaysia' in April 2018. At the same time, a 400-hectare Muar Furniture Park was launched to be ready in two years to accommodate more factories and expand the industry. To further support the vibrant industry, the government had earlier banned rubberwood exports in July 2017 to help manufacturers access a supply of competitive raw material. Loan incentives were also introduced to encourage greater automation to speed up production, quality and efficiency.

Muar's furniture heritage traces its roots back to the early '80s as a wood-based cottage industry. Since then, the small town rose to transform itself into a competitive global player with 700 factories and shipping 6,000 - 7,000 containers overseas each month.

Reportedly, MIFF 2019 will feature an estimated 650 suppliers from Malaysia and other top Asian furniture producers. In 2018, the show expanded 25% to 100,000 sqm. It attracted 625 exhibitors and 20,000 visitors from 134 countries, closing with record orders worth US\$984 million.

