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Sleek deck chair wins first prize

Stephanie Ng beats nine other finalists in annual furniture design competition

By YVONNE T. NATHAN
yvonne.n@thestar.com.my
Photos by M. AZHAR ARIF



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AS INTERNATIONAL demand for Malaysian-made furniture rises, the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) 2015 has provided the design industry with a front seat to drive exports.

MIFF holds an annual Furniture Design Competition (FDC) that targets the development and production of unique products.

The International Trade and Industry Ministry (MITI), and Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) are also helping the furniture companies to develop and promote our products overseas.

Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Lee Chee Leong said he was confident that the MIFF FDC would act as an effective platform to cultivate young designers and encourage them to build a career in the furniture industry.

"Last year, Malaysian furniture exports rose to RM8bil.

Injecting new blood into the industry will encourage design innovation and inspire high value products and brands.

— DATUK LEE CHEE LEONG

"Injecting new blood into the industry will encourage design innovation and inspire high value products and brands," he said.

The FDC was held on March 5 and designer Stephanie Ng Hui Sien won first prize out of a pool of 220 entries and 10 finalists.

She was awarded RM10,000, a trophy as well as a certificate for her design titled "Mick's Deck Chair", which was not only aesthetically pleasing but also practical and comfortable.

Her sleek design made from Malaysian Red Balau was prototyped by Supreme Tropical Furniture Sdn Bhd.

Supreme Tropical Furniture Sdn Bhd then went on to win the "Best Prototype Maker" category alongside Elk Furniture Industries for their joint efforts in manufacturing the "Infinity Lounge Chair" designed by Wan Nurhanis Farisa Aziman.

Other awards of note included the "Best Presentation Award" for booth creativity and product display as well as the "Furniture Excellence Award" for product innovation and quality.

MIFF Furniture Excellence Award 2015 chief judge Roberta Mutti encouraged Malaysian companies to begin working



> SEE NEXT PAGE First-prize winner: Ng with her award-winning design called 'Mick's Deck Chair'.

M'sian companies urged to invest in new technologies

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on medium to long-term programmes with professional designers.

"It's time for Malaysian companies to look for their identity and allow young, good designers to work with the companies to develop new and original products, made using local materials.

"They also need to invest in new technologies to raise the quality of their products to a higher level to compete in the international market.

"Ergonomics, good design, local materials, attention to the different markets and their needs; all these aspects joined together can create well-designed products but it takes time," she said.

The yearly export-oriented furniture trade show organised by UBM Malaysia was held from March 3 to 7 at the Putra World Trade Centre and Matrade Exhibition and Convention Centre in Kuala Lumpur.

Prizes for the various categories were sponsored by Malaysian Timber Council.

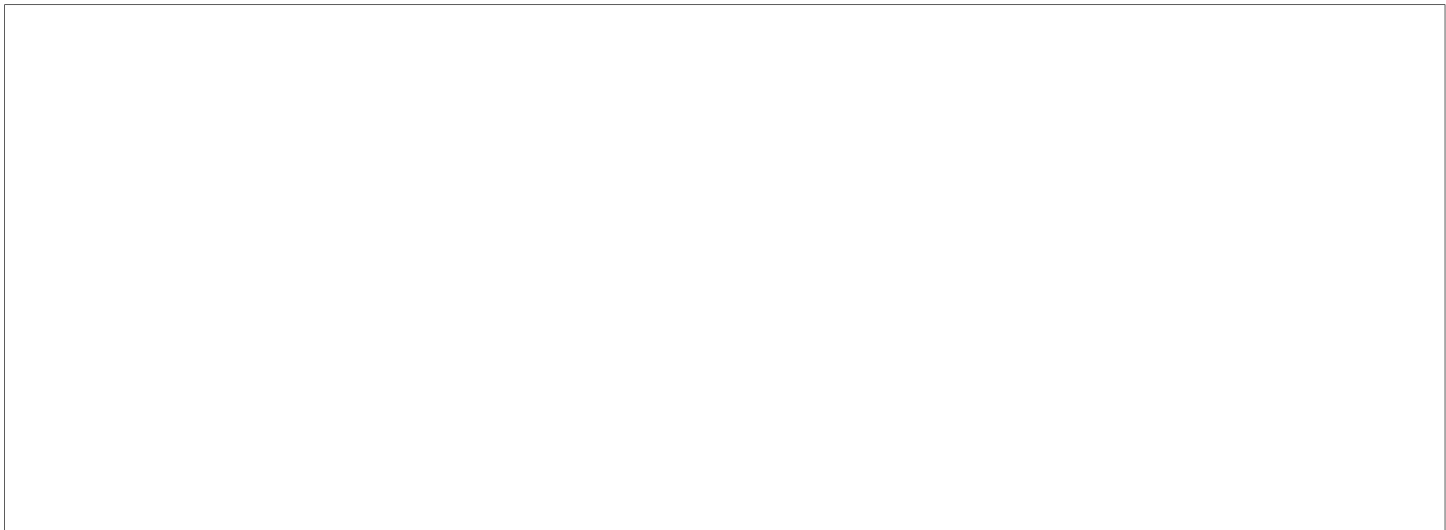
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Unique: Lee admiring a design called 'Kyte' by Lim Bo Qiang, one of the top 10 finalists in the furniture design competition.



Just sit back: Lee testing out Wan Nurhanis' Infinity Lounge Chair design while MIFF chairman Datuk Dr Tan Chin Huat (right), Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) senior researcher officer Dr Rahim Sudin (second from right), and UBM Asia managing director (Asean Business) M. Gandhi (third from right) look on.

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Well done! Lee (fourth from left) handing over a mock check to Ng. With them are (from left) FDC second-place winner Lee Pei Ying, Wan Nurhanis, UBM Asia managing director (Asean Business) M. Gandhi, MIFF chairman Datuk Dr Ian Chin Huat, Plantation Industry and Commodities Ministry deputy secretary-general Datuk M. Nagarajan and representatives from Supreme Tropical Furniture Sdn Bhd and Elk Furniture Industries who jointly won in the 'Best Prototype Maker' category for their efforts in manufacturing the 'Infinity Lounge Chair' designed by Wan Nurhanis.