

Getting into gear for bigger show

Furniture fair organisers lay out plans for next year's event during Buyers' Night



(From left) Goi, MIFF founder and chairman Datuk Dr Tan Chin Huat, Dr Mohd Shahreen, UBM Asia Asean business managing director M. Gandhi and Muar Furniture Association president Neo Chee Kiat launching MIFF 2018 during the MIFF 2017 Buyers' Night. — Photos: MUHAMAD SHAHRIL/The Star



MIFF 2017 Buyers' Night hosted some 700 guests to a night of food, drinks and entertainment.



Local songstress Vina Khoo (centre) belting out some upbeat tunes.

By **KELLY TEY**
kellytey@thestar.com.my

MORE than two decades on, the momentum of the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) continues to grow strong.

In fact, the trade show promises to be even bigger next year.

During the MIFF 2017 Buyers' Night held at Sunway Putra Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, MIFF general manager Karen Goi said many trade visitors were made aware of the big changes the show would have for next year.

"MIFF will be expanding in 2018, and like our buyers, we have been waiting for this.

"Rest assured we will be ready with a big show with new products, networking contacts, and more importantly, big business ideas and opportunities to help buyers grow in their business," she said.

Seaquest Ltd managing director Bruce Hales, whose furniture business is based in New Zealand, said he looked forward to next year's event.

"I am definitely anticipating an even more efficient environment that will help us be more productive in our visit."

Hales, who has been a regular visitor to the show for about 20 years, said trade shows like MIFF continued to be relevant and important.

"We get to renew our friendships with suppliers, build new relationships as well as learn about new products, designs and trends for the sake of our business' future.

"Trade shows allow us to grasp different opportunities in the shortest possible time," he added.

There were also positive remarks from first time visitors.

Pradeep Kumar, who is a proprietor of India-based furniture company, Kefcon Furniture, said this was the first trade show he had participated in throughout his 15 years in the industry.

"As it is my first visit, I took the time to look around and I am very happy with what I see.

"The exhibition was very complete," said Pradeep on the extensive exhibits.

He added that he was looking to venture into other furniture trade shows in the region, and anticipated returning to an even more extensive MIFF next year.

This year's Buyers' Night, themed "Dancing All Night", saw some 700 guests from all over the world enjoying camaraderie over food, drinks, dance and latest talks of the industry at the event.

Held in line with the five-day MIFF trade show currently being held at Putra World Trade Centre and Matrade Exhibition and Convention Centre Kuala Lumpur, Goi said the night was also meant to celebrate the energy and confidence of the trade show as well as show appreciation to its trade visitors.

Malaysia External Trade Development Corp (Matrade) chief executive officer Dr Mohd Shahreen Zainooreen Madros highlighted the cooperation shared by Matrade and MIFF.

"We have been partners for over 20 years, and it is a testament to how public and private sectors can work together to bring advancements to the country," said Mohd Shahreen.

On top of niche, specialised products which can be found in the country, Mohd Shahreen also noted that Malaysia was a good springboard for businesses looking for opportunities, not just in terms of procurement, but also investments within the South-East Asian region.

"With the upcoming new facilities and bigger space, I hope MIFF will grow even greater in the coming years.

"This would create more opportunities for export trade and promote strong links between Malaysian companies and the global community," he concluded.



Gandhi (in black) and UBM employees performing a Bollywood-inspired dance number.



Illusionist and mentalist Andrew Lee stuns the crowd with his magical performance.