

Pacific Trade Shows Look for Ways to Compete With China

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but they really haven't done as good a job of marketing that to the buyers as some of these other countries have," Miller told HFN. "They felt hiring an American firm might help them reposition the show to make it more visible and attractive to Western buyers."

SINGAPORE

Singapore likely has the jump on its neighbors when it comes to design. This ultra-clean and orderly island nation has its feet firmly in both the East and the West, its hands in contemporary styling and the traditional, and is able to produce a vast mix of designs. The International Furniture Fair Singapore/23rd ASEAN Furniture Show, held March 1 to 5, has become known for its melding of styles from around the globe, including a few examples of traditional design from the United States. Furnishings from Vietnam, Indonesia and other Pacific Rim countries were well-represented, and they all want to export to the United States.

"This is one stop where buyers can see entire collections, and the local manufacturers aren't the only ones showing here," said Quek Chin Tuan, chief executive officer of IFFS. Quek added that next year he will add a hall featuring woodworking and machinery. "I hope these exhibitors will write their order and then walk across the street to the other hall," he said.

Environmental conservation is working its way into the furniture mix in Singapore. EthniCraft, a Belgian manufacturer, has introduced its "Amazon Range" coffee tables, made with South American woods that passed muster from the Forest Stewardship Council. The product was part of EthniCraft's Emorational collection of products from well-managed forests: "emotional," pertaining to the solid woods used, and "rational," for the styling's clean lines.

Halo Asia, a Chinese producer of leather upholstery, views this market as the best of the 33 Asian shows at which it exhibits, according to Tim Oulton, a Halo principal. "There's more of the top end here," he said.

At the IFFS show, California Furniture Exports was one of the few U.S. exhibitors, and this Singapore show was its first, following some China shows dur-

ing which CFX President Stephen Wise felt his products' designs risked getting knocked off by the Chinese. CFX showed a sampling of products with unique American styl-

ing, including Ridgeway and Howastery by Berkline, Woodmark and Nova; and case goods by Stanley, F-

