

US\$240 spot orders generated at Singapore's IFFS/AFS 2006

THE INTERNATIONAL Furniture Fair Singapore/Asean Furniture Show 2006 (IFFS/AFS) has again proven to be an excellent business conduit for the international furniture trade fraternity in Asia, according to IFFS Pte Ltd, the show organisers. The fair generated a record yield of estimated US\$240 million of spot orders over the five-day event from March 1-5. The event is also expected to garner an additional US\$2.1 billion of follow-on sales for the year ahead.

IFFS/AFS 2006 recorded the highest exhibitor and visitor count in its 23-year history, with 505 exhibitors from 29 countries and 17,838 trade participants from 112 countries.

The annual event occupied six halls of the Singapore Expo and boasted an increase of eight per cent in size from 2005 to a nett exhibition space of 35,500 square metres.

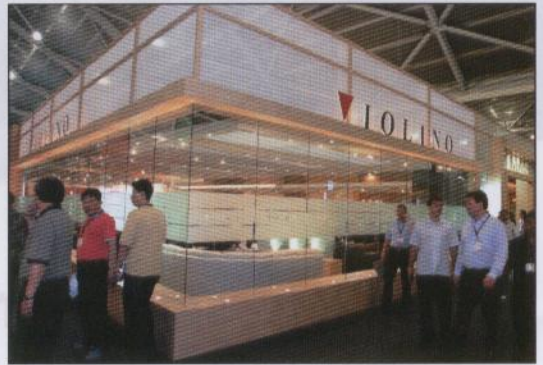
Asean countries saw significantly stronger participation at IFFS/AFS 2006, with a 20 per cent increase in nett exhibition space compared to last year's show.

With more than 32,000 pieces of furniture and furnishing products featured at IFFS/AFS 2006, Singa-

pore boasted the largest collection of quality products in the Asean region and remained the preferred sourcing destination for prominent buyers, the organisers said. This year's IFFS/AFS 2006 attracted close to 40 per cent more foreign buying delegations than the previous year, from 48 buying groups to 77, including prominent players from the neighbouring regions as well as Europe, America, the Middle East and Africa.

Mr Steven Chew, Chief Operating Officer of Singapore's Sitra Holdings, said: "This year's show has been the best we had since we started exhibiting at the fair five years ago. We saw more quality buyers this year compared to the previous ones. We will continue to use IFFS/AFS as a key platform to reach out to our customers, and we will definitely increase our exhibition space at next year's fair."

Commented VIP Buyer, Mr Peter Walkom, Managing Director of Casual Living from Australia: "The



huge array of products on display, coupled with distinctive designs, was truly exceptional. We are convinced that three days is not sufficient and we intend to return next year and stay for the entire show period of five days."

On what to expect at next year's show, Mr James Koh, President of the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) and Chairman of IFFS Pte Ltd, said: "Moving forward, the SFIC and IFFS Pte Ltd will be rolling out new initiatives geared towards improving the size, scope, and quality of the show. IFFS/AFS 2007 will see the implementation of EPLATFORM, a Design Entrepreneur Development Programme and the launch of the inaugural World of Woodworking Machinery (WOWMAC) 2007. We are looking forward to staging an even bigger, better and more comprehensive show for our international audience next year."

IFFS/AFS 2007 and WOWMAC 2007 will become the largest annual trade show in Singapore, boasting a nett space of 42,000 square metres spread over seven halls of the Singapore Expo.

IFFS Pte Ltd revealed that at the closing of IFFS/AFS 2006, more than 60 per cent of exhibition space for the 2007 fair had already been booked.

Indon plywood mills hurting

MORE plywood companies will be closed down if the Indonesian government goes ahead with the plan to increase electricity rates by around 50 percent, according to a report by *NZT&E: MarketNewZealand.com*.

The plywood industry was one of the major foreign currency earners prior to the 1998 but 75 plywood companies have ceased operation due to a shortage of log supply and inefficiencies of using old machinery and equipment.

Indonesia used to have 125 plywood companies producing over 10 million cubic metres of plywood annually. Now, the country produces around four million cubic metres of plywood per annum.