



IFFS/AFS 2008:

## A Sea-Change

Show dates and formats go through a marked alteration in 2008, one year earlier than the previously announced 2009. This game plan for growth includes the recognition from and partnership with the Dongguan fair.

By Nicole Liang

Change may be the only constant but to excel, one might find power in unity. For International Furniture Fair Singapore (IFFS)/ASEAN Furniture Show (AFS) to do both, the leading Asian exhibition makes a statement of astute judgement and a show of stout dedication. IFFS/AFS has decided on a date change with effect from 2008 and found a partner in the Dongguan Famous Furniture Association.

IFFS/AFS 2008 will be held over four days from March 9-12, 2008, instead of its traditional March 1-5 exhibition period. The format of the show is also altered for greater efficiency. It was previously held over five days, with the afternoon of the fifth day open to the public. Next year, IFFS/AFS will take place within four days. Show hours for the last day will be lengthened for consumers from 5-9pm on March 12, 2008.

In an interview with *Furniture & Furnishing Export, International (FFE)*, the show's organiser shares the rationale behind this sea-change. Firstly, the shortened exhibition period saves exhibitors time and cost, since trade buyers generally do not appear on a dedicated open-to-public day at all. Secondly, the new dates will help make Singapore a link between the Southeast Asian and Chinese fairs.



CEO Quek Chin Tuan  
of IFFS Pte Ltd

"We have studied the Southeast Asian show circuit over the past two years and received much feedback on our show dates. There is a significant gap between the dates of IFFS and other the exhibitions in China. Foreign buyers say they are spending too much time in Asia. With two Asian trips to make within a month, it is not only tiring for them, but expensive as well," said CEO Quek Chin Tuan of IFFS Pte Ltd to *FFE*.

"This move will create more convenience for our buyers since the travel time is shortened. They will only need to spend two weeks in Asia next year, instead of the usual three," Quek added. Take the schedule in 2007 for example, industry players who are interested in attending various shows in Asia would

have begun the circuit with the Cebu International Furniture and Furnishings Exhibition (Cebu X) on February 28 and then moved on to see the IFFS on March 1. Across the border, the Export Furniture Exhibition (EFE) opened on March 4 and Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) on March 6. The Thailand International Furniture Fair (TIFF)/interior design asia (ida) ended March 11, six days before the string of shows in China's Guangdong province start.

The Singapore show's date change was initially slated to be implemented in 2009, Quek said in a statement dated March 27, 2007. However, with other Southeast Asian shows making a seemingly concerted effort in date shifts next year, organisers saw the need to stay relevant and quickly. Also, with the show venue freed up next year after a long wait, 2008 is a perfect timing.

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*Quek added.*

MIFF will take place on March 4-8, 2008. EFE has shifted its 2008 dates to March 2-6, while Cebu X will open from March 6-9. This means that buyers are likely to visit Singapore last in their Southeast Asian sourcing tour.

Or, it could be foreign visitors' first event in Asia if they are keener on the Guangdong shows. Dongguan's International Famous Furniture Fair (IFFF) has recently announced that it will change its show dates to March 16-20, starting a day earlier than usual. This is done partly to further bridge the gap between IFFF and IFFS.

"IFFF sees the value and strategic positioning of IFFS as an international show outside of China. In terms of contents, these two shows alone will cover the entire spectrum of Asian products. In less than two weeks, your sourcing trip can be done, with time for factory visits as well," said Quek.

Partnering to make these two shows the definitive Asian sourcing destinations, IFFS/AFS and IFFF will be working together to develop unified promotion collaterals for overseas markets. Said Secretary-General Fang Hui of the Dongguan

