



Brussels Furniture Fair 2018

Slight decrease in visitor numbers,
but very hopeful signals from the Netherlands

Looking back at the Brussels Furniture Fair, we can state that it was once more an appealing edition. The visitor number of the updated fair decreased slightly (1.76%), mainly in respect of Belgian visitors, but more importantly, the buying behaviour of both the international and the Belgian trade was good, and the public once again became more international, now with visitors from 40 countries.

“As a trade fair, we are not immune to the difficult situation in the furniture trade, and we did see a slight fall in overall visitor numbers, even though more visitors came from abroad”, states fair director Lieven Van den Heede. “In Belgium we lost ground, with a downfall of 9%. I probably don’t need to outline the reasons: following truly dreadful sales figures since early spring, it should come as no surprise that a number of shops chose not to attend. Over the past year, a number of businesses have also closed their doors.”

“We also received fewer visitors from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, but on the other hand we recorded cheering figures from France and especially the Netherlands. Visitor numbers from our northern neighbour rose by 6% and we exceeded the threshold of 5,000 visitors. Consequently, the Netherlands are coming closer to representing 30% of all visitors.”

Clear innovation efforts

During our visit, we noticed how the extensive innovation efforts ensured a better perception. For instance: a lot more space was created to welcome visitors and besides this the new, more rigid style of the trend passages was appealing. It therefore comes as no surprise that exhibitors reported good sales figures, after having made serious efforts to come forward with innovative, surprising or original products. LS Bedding was a good example of this.

LS director Frank Verschuere: “New was that we further refined the manufacturing of the mattresses and that we focussed on the individual in doing this. We also presented a new pillow made from natural latex and talalay latex, which is already purchased by a number of our Red Devils (note: during the World Cup Football, LS Bedding was the company that provided the bed bases for the Belgian players). The fact that we highlight how the bed has to adjust itself to the user, and not vice versa, was translated into quite a lot of interest.”

Balthazars 2018

As tradition dictates, the handing out of the Balthazars was the highlight. Best of Belgium went to Reset of Magnitude by LS Bedding, in a design by Alain Berteau. Both other winners in this category were Mintjens Furniture with Caress and the Wire Lounger by Joli (design Mathias de Ferm). The Innovation award was awarded to Resleep by Velda, with Recor Originals with Soul and Otium Care with Daan as winners. In its turn, Best International went to Glide by Kluskens (design: Tiel Design Studio), with Design Studio Zürich with Edge and Egoitaliano with Honey as runners-up. Finally, the Love at first sight Balthazar was given to Lucie van Moome (design: Tessa Lauwaert). Here, Passe Partout with Thor and Mathy by Bols with Discovery were the runners-up.

Next year, your appointment with the Brussels Furniture Fair 2019 is from 3 till 6 November. More information can be found at www.meubelbeurs.be. ■

1 Already at the entrance, the option for more experience became clear (All images: Brussels Furniture Fair)

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3 All winners of the Balthazars
The number of visitors declined slightly, but still business was good

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