



Clockwise from top left: Baker Furniture, DTP, Hartman, Tetrad, Passe Partout and MiaZia were among the 268 exhibitors (an increase of 10) from 24 countries – including 76 new exhibitors

# BEing there

Brussels saw a better than expected performance

'Exhibitors and visitors alike were unanimous in their praise of this year's Brussels Furniture Fair: this was a brilliant edition that once again saw the fair upgraded. There were stunning stands and appealing collections, and a pleasing level of buying from both the international trade and the Belgian trade,' says Lieven Van den Heede, Brussels Furniture Fair director.

'It was also important that visitors did actually turn up, as prior to the fair there was some unease about this. Total visitor numbers did fall slightly. It is no surprise that this was chiefly apparent among Belgian visitors, as these comprise the largest number of visitors. There is probably no need for us to outline the reasons for this: following truly dreadful sales figures in the shops since early spring, it should come as no surprise that a number of shops have chosen not to

attend. Over the past year a number of businesses have also closed.

'However, with the two most important foreign visitor groups – the Netherlands and France – we actually saw an increase. We welcomed 0.7% more visitors from France. Visitor numbers from our northern neighbour rose by no less than 6% and we went over the threshold of 5,000 visitors. The Netherlands is coming ever closer to representing 30% of all visitors. Is it merely a matter of time before they overtake the number of Belgians?

'We also received 113 fewer visitors from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, a drop of 8.3%. The German market in particular is in a state of flux and is extremely volatile. The combination of buyers who are changing group and fewer buyers in the shops probably meant that a visit to Brussels Furniture

Fair was not top of their to-do list. Visitors from the United Kingdom and Ireland remained stable. Moreover, the trade fair has again become more international, this year attracting visitors from 40 different countries.

'We were told by a number of exhibitors with whom we were able to speak during the fair that buying from both Belgian and foreign visitors was better than had been expected or feared prior to the start of the fair. In general, the closing balance of this year's fair was positive. It would seem that the furniture trade believes that the way to get out of this impasse is to renew its offering.'

Judging the annual Balthazar awards at the Brussels Furniture Fair proved tougher than normal this year, with the jury deliberating for a long time: the prize for best international product was a particularly close call. ➡➡➡

## REVIEW



Velda won the Innovation award



Kluskens won the Best International award

### THE WINNERS WERE:

**Best of Belgium:** Reset by Magnitude by LS Bedding, designed by Alain Berteau. 'This hybrid 24/7 design concept anticipates the trend towards open interior design and the new living culture. The bed becomes a micro world in the space that is designed both to sleep in and to live in,' said the judges.

Highly commended were Mintjens Furniture with Caress and the Wire Lounger by Joli, designed by Mathias de Ferm.

**Innovation:** Resleep by Velda. 'A revolutionary and marketable cradle-to-cradle box spring concept which revolves around recycling. Neither PU foam nor glue is used, including for the pocket springs. Thus the individual parts can be quickly and simply recycled.'

Recor Originals with Soul and Otium Care with Daan were highly commended.

**Best International:** Glide by Kluskens, designed by Tiel Design Studio. 'The V-shaped profile on the underside of this tabletop led to an inventive redesign of its support. The table's length feels highly contemporary whilst its width is a nod to old-fashioned cosiness.'

Highly commended were Design Studio Zürich with Edge and Egoitaliano with Honey.

**Love At First Sight:** Lucie by Moome, designed by Tessa Lauwaert. 'An attractive, feminine design sofa with unusual details such as idiosyncratic feet and the uniquely upholstered curve above them. Sleek and slim on the outside, but soft and nonchalant on the inside.'

Passe Partout with Thor and Mathy by Bols with Discovery were highly commended.

Visit: [www.furniturefairbrussels.be](http://www.furniturefairbrussels.be)



LS Bedding won the Best of Belgium award



Moome won the Love At First Sight award