



63 companies made their debut

On the up

Brussels saw an unexpected rise in visitors

'Following last year's fall, visitor numbers increased again this year. This is a highly encouraging result, given that sales in the furniture trade in Belgium and in the majority of our neighbouring countries were pretty disappointing this year.

'Not only did the Brussels Furniture Fair see a visual upgrade but once again it also became more international. This year, our visitors came from some 52 countries, including 18 outside Europe. Foreign visitors climbed to more than 65%,' says Lieven Van den Heede, Brussels Furniture Fair general manager.

'We would have been happy to settle in advance for this positive result. Prior to the fair, the market signs were not favourable. Of our neighbouring countries, only the furniture trade in

the Netherlands was seeing positive sales. We were therefore braced for fewer visitors again, which would have been no real surprise given the difficult market.

'The opposite proved to be the case: there were 3.57% more visitors, with an increase in almost all markets. It was only from the UK and Ireland that there were 30 fewer visitors. The protracted regulatory questions around Brexit are just part of the explanation; we also know that two flights on which buyers were due to travel were cancelled.'

For the first time in a decade the number of Belgian visitors rose, now making up 34% of the total. Visitors from the Netherlands rose to 27%, while the show made progress in its largest export market, France, with numbers up by 4%.

'There was a marked upturn in interest from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. This is our strongest growing market, with an increase of almost 12%. The quality of the German language visitors was also outstanding, with a number of head buyers from a series of key groups attending.'

The show had 274 exhibitors (six higher than 2018) of 18 nationalities, all European bar one. Some 63 companies made their debut at the show.

The UK is the fourth largest export market for the Belgian furniture industry, although far behind France, Germany and the Netherlands. Exports in the first half of 2019 rose by 5.6% to 17.6m Euros, according to trade association Fedustria.

Visit: www.furniturefairbrussels.be →→→



274 companies took part



Visitor numbers from almost every country grew

This year the show presented four Balthazars Awards



BEST OF BELGIUM MINTJENS SLEEPLINE: RIALTO

'A stunning symbiosis of two sleep worlds: box springs and wooden beds. The upholstered headboard has an almost sculptural design, and its flowing contours reappear in the rounded feet and edges of the bed, the chests of drawers and occasional pieces. In close-up, the sophistication of the veneer and upholstery are clear. Rialto epitomises the phrase "craftmanship is mastery".'

Laureates: Mathy by Bols – Asymetry and Saunaco – Cas audio



BEST INTERNATIONAL HIMOLLA: SIGNA

'What an innovative, not to say revolutionary metamorphosis at himolla. Signa is young and trendy, whilst retaining the familiar comfort. Reclining functions are concealed with great refinement. You have to discover them... the finesse lies in the small angles and seams, for example in the concealed footrest. And how about the sheer suppleness of the adjustable back? Signa attests to a daring and highly successful new design vision from himolla.'

Laureates: Kluskens – Adam and Urban Cotton – Queen



LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT ROM: VEGAS

'Wow, Rom! You see it, you love it... and you will be surprised. The elements will inspire you to come up with dynamic and creative settings. The sky is the limit. Then there's the secret wow factor: the modules are anything but standard. All are custom made, based on the legendary 10cm made-to-measure concept and the golden symmetry rule. All elements are identical in width. This makes Vegas a unique postmodern phenomenon in the retro world.'

Laureates: B-Etnika – Rominna dining chair and Vipack – Casami



INNOVATION OTIUM CARE: MULTI

'The innovative answer to a pressing demand from the market: the need for practical, beautiful and affordable furnishing solutions for people in need of care. Your own, familiar reclining armchair can be transformed into a care armchair: all you have to do is replace the base. This brilliant, modular solution successfully meets emotional, functional, budgetary and ecological needs.'

Laureates: Revor – Circular mattress and LS Bedding – App Ergosleep Ecosystem