

A recurring nightmare for people living overseas is to find the perfect place to live and furnish it beautifully, only to discover the furniture you've bought is cracking, falling apart, becoming discoloured or worse still, infested with termites. And considering how difficult it can be to furnish a whole room and find pieces that match or complement each other, the loss of one of those pieces necessitates the visiting of every furniture shop you can find and a panic that the same thing will happen again, or worse still, to all your remaining furniture, especially if it was purchased from the same retailer. If you aren't familiar with the options available and how to recognise a good deal when you see it, then furniture shopping can turn into a difficult, hazardous task.

However, you can minimise your furniture-related stress by educating yourself about how to tell a good quality piece from a bad quality item and knowing what you should expect to pay.

According to Mr. Gerard Ng, of Pursers Choice - who has a long history of helping expatriates find the best furniture and imports a wide variety of excellent furniture from around the region for his shop in Bangsar Village - items of furniture particularly popular with expatriates can be broken down into two categories. Firstly, practical pieces like beds, living sets and dining sets, and secondly the more unusual, sometimes antique pieces like daybeds or large coffee tables. He adds that many expatriates opt to buy furniture here rather than having it shipped from their home country because there is more variety here, and a much better choice due to the competitiveness of the market.

Fully Furnished

An ABC Guide To Buying Quality Furniture

With no shortage of excellent woods, such as locally sourced Teak, and the latest imports from Europe and beyond, it is little wonder that the furniture industry in Malaysia is thriving. If you're looking to invest in some quality furniture, here is your beginners guide.

Words by Cheryl Dunn and Michelle Whytcross
Photos by Dreamstime, Janine & Xtra Furniture



Simple yet chic modern furniture

expatriatehomes



Comfortable living from Xtra

Malaysia has a very competitive furniture industry, which results in very low prices

"Designs that are common tend to be cheaper as they are mass produced and can sometimes be made from lower grade timber. Better designs are often made from kiln dried timber, precision cutting and better finishing. These tend to be more expensive" explains Gerard, with regards to pricing. In other words, don't pay over-the-top prices for cheaply-made designs that are found everywhere.

Jessie Ng from Timeless Design deals with more contemporary furniture, which is just as big a hit with the consumer as the traditional wooden pieces. "In today's market there is not a fixed style that is popular. If there is one trend it would be contemporary, but very often with subtle influence of various styles such as oriental, retro or even Balinese."

Jessie is under no illusions as to why expatriates are so keen to invest in furniture during their time in Malaysia. "Price. Malaysia has a

purser's choice
contemporary asian lifestyle

. furniture . lamps . home accessories . fashion . gift ideas .

simply tropical

bangsar village II . 2nd floor units 1b+2
2 jalan telawi 1 . 59100 kuala lumpur . malaysia
tel +603 2282 1928 . fax +603 2282 1923

www.purserschoice.com

expatriatehomes

very competitive furniture industry, which results in very low prices. Although, another important factor is that you can still custom-make your furniture in Malaysia, which is almost impossible to do in Europe. That's why expatriates are constantly adding pieces to their homes".

She also has some advice for maintaining the quality of your furniture after purchase. "Always clean your furniture on a regular basis, and ensure you send your upholstery for dry cleaning, or call a dry-cleaning company to come to your home before it gets visibly dirty."

Wooden furniture can be maintained in optimum condition with regular polishing and waxing. Most furniture from Pursers Choice is just stained and waxed. Regular waxing, particularly with beeswax moisturises the wood. Pursers Choice specialises in tropical-style furniture, manufactured in Indonesia, along with some accent pieces, also from Indonesia. "Our furniture is very straight-lined and easy to use. Where possible we use kiln dried wood. Our furniture is easy to mix and match with other furniture as it is simple in design and timeless" Gerard says about the furniture's appeal.

Hallmarks of good quality furniture, particularly wooden furniture include having a nice grain in the wood, good finish and construction. The more expensive a piece is, the more likely it is to have been made with old timber. A safe and far and away the most popular choice for expatriates, is Teak wood, as it is very hard and there is no risk of woodworm or termites. Gerard advises expatriates

Many expatriates opt to buy furniture here rather than having it shipped from their home country because there is more variety here

to be careful when buying furniture made from very young wood, as it is very soft due to its high moisture content and joints may start to split once the wood dries. It is always advisable to ask if the wood is kiln-dried as this removes the moisture content and prevents the problem of split joints. In addition, changes in humidity do not cause weakening or cracking in kiln-dried wood.

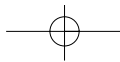


Now available, Ripples Bench by Toyo Ito

Contemporary furniture, lighting and accessories

Bangsar Shopping Centre, T115 • tel - 2092 2618

GUDANG
—DAMANSARA—



With steel items, the gauge of the steel is very important. Too thin and the piece will bend. Jessie believes that the key to spotting the quality of the workmanship is the way the furniture is joined. For example, cheaper furniture manufacturers will use nails, where the real high-end pieces use wooden joints.

Don't be shy, remember to ask questions: be it about the type of furniture, how to treat it and whether or not it is covered by a warranty. The best decisions are informed decisions. Jessie Ng's advice is to "ask the salesman for as many details as possible. Remember: If they can't give you a satisfactory answer – DON'T BUY from them!"

Discuss your future purchases with friends, compare notes on shops and feel free to pass on information about where salespeople were helpful or where the quality of the advice appeared to be lacking. After all, wouldn't you want your friends to do the same for you? ■

Expatriate Lifestyle would like to thank Gerard Ng from Pursers Choice and Jessie Ng from Timeless Design for their opinions and advice.

Competition 

Prizes to be won:
3 x RM100 Vouchers at Timeless Designs

Answer this question and send to the address below.
How can wooden furniture be maintained in optimum condition?

Answers must be sent to us by 1st April 2007

E-mail: competitions@expatriatelifestyle.com
Mail to: Expatriate Lifestyle Homes Competition, c/o Mongoose Publishing Sdn Bhd 33.04, Level 33, Menara AmBank, 8 Jalan Yap Kwan Seng, 50450 Kuala Lumpur.

Please remember to include your home address on your competition entry. All winners will be notified by post.



Contemporary Furniture from Janine

