

A FRUITFUL GLOBAL MEETING

By Andrea Sim (with interview courtesy of Dr Kurt Fischer)

Surfaces Asia 2013's conference programme came to a successful end after holding its first event at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. From September 23 to 24, 2013, the two day show saw 92 delegates and six sponsors coming from 16 different countries on four continents. The event organiser was TCM Asia, a cooperation between Bridge's for Concepts and Technical Conference Management KG (TCM). Dr Kurt Fischer, Founder and Managing Director of TCM said, "We were very pleased with the attendance. The subject of our new conference 'Surfaces Asia' was decorative surfaces for both interior and exterior applications. It was the logical continuation of similar conferences which we have held in Europe and North America since 2002 where the participants are manufacturers, who come from the decorative panels sector as well as their suppliers and customers." The aim of the TCM conference was to provide a new forum for the decorative surfaces industry in Asia and Australia. Delegates from Europe and America also attended the show.

As Surfaces events have always been about showcasing recent market developments and technologies for floor coverings, décor printing, coatings and other remarkable innovations such as 'digital printing' used in the decoration industry, these were brought into Surfaces Asia 2013. Manufacturers including suppliers, users and manufacturers of raw material, additives, manufacturers of thermoplastic foils and board producers participated in the event.

Apart from the show, the conference in particular, was the main highlight because the key topics were those which are talked about in the industry and around the world enabling participants to get in touch with up-to-date news and views on what's trending now. Dr Kurt Fischer shares with us his sentiments on some of the many 'key topics' covered: "I think we found again a nice blend of market overviews, products, design and technology. It would be unfair if I picked out one or some presentations, since we had an impressive line-up of very qualified speakers. In one way or another, the distinguished speakers were all very good."



Dr Fischer added that one of the most interesting aspects of the conference was 'the broad spectrum of presentations'. Some were focusing on design trends in general, others on specifics like glossy or three dimensional surfaces. Other presentations were more technically oriented, ranging from digital print as the new technological megatrend to very detailed aspects of certain production and lacquering processes.

The well-esteemed guest speakers in the conference were carefully chosen by TCM Asia and Dr Fischer mentioned: "The presentation on market developments from Pöry Management Consulting raised a lot of interest. Many other distinguished guest speakers included Peter H. Meyer from Wirtschaftsberatung on Global Trends and Perspectives for Plastic Surface Flooring Systems, Peter Wostmann from Hymmen on Industrial Digital Printing – Innovative Surface Technology, Hannes Eder from Senoplast on Glossy Future – Scratching Allowed and many more."

The organiser chose Kuala Lumpur (KL) as the venue to hold Surfaces Asia 2013 because it is centrally located to the major markets in Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, and it is also well connected to the rest of Asia and Australia. Moreover, given the highly developed conference facilities of the newly

opened Grand Hyatt Hotel and the fact that TCM Asia is also based in Kuala Lumpur. The sponsors who lent their support to this event included Nitto Denko, SESA, Venjakob, Sappi/Warren release papers, Hymmen and Impress, The Décor Company.

When asked how Surfaces Asia's conference differed from other Asia or Southeast Asia's conferences, Dr Fischer elaborated "We are not aware of any comparable event in this region since we held our Laminates conference in Shanghai back in 2003. From the preliminary feedback from our participants, we learned that they, too, appreciate the new forum. Our message is, "Nothing can beat a conference when it comes to intense information exchange." He added "the exchange of information is not limited to the presentations, it goes on during coffee breaks, lunch breaks, and the conference dinner, in many cases ending late at night at the hotel bar."

Lastly, based on the success of this year's event and the feedback of the participants, Dr Fischer said that they have decided to make Surfaces Asia an annual event. Therefore plans are underway for another conference next year, likely to be held in Bangkok, Thailand or Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. **PFA**

"Surfaces Asia 2013 was a perfect platform to introduce ourselves to the Asian market, which we only have started targeting recently. Impress, The Décor Company is offering not only printed decorative papers but also impregnated papers such as foils, inks and even technologies, and the opportunity to discuss synergy market solutions with many of the show's delegates. As our design philosophy is new for Asia, we had excellent chances to present and discuss in details with some of our potential customers during the coffee and lunch breaks."

- Tobias Ruppert,
Impress Surfaces GmbH,
Germany



"Today's designs can range from stylish and rocky to adorable; each element tells its own story. At the same time, the designs manage to interpret the original materials at a perfect and compelling level. It is exciting to witness how well press-plates and release papers add on to the individuality of a design by providing the right finish. Digital printing remains an interesting field as well. The show was a great opportunity to meet the heads of the industry and we got to network in a relaxed atmosphere. Besides, Kuala Lumpur was a good choice of location together with the Hyatt Hotel and Neo Tamarind as the chosen venues. The organisers were excellent; their personalised service and attention to detail were much appreciated."

-Verena Werner,
Area Sales Manager of Interprint Décor
for Australia, New Zealand & Singapore Germany

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KUANG YUNG MACHINERY CO., LTD.
283, SEC. 2, FENG SHYH RD., FENG YUAN DIST., TAICHUNG 42081, TAIWAN
Tel.: +886-4-2522-6151 Fax: +886-4-2524-3251
E-mail: hope@kuangyung.com.tw http://www.kywoodworkingmachines.com